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NATIONAL REVIEW

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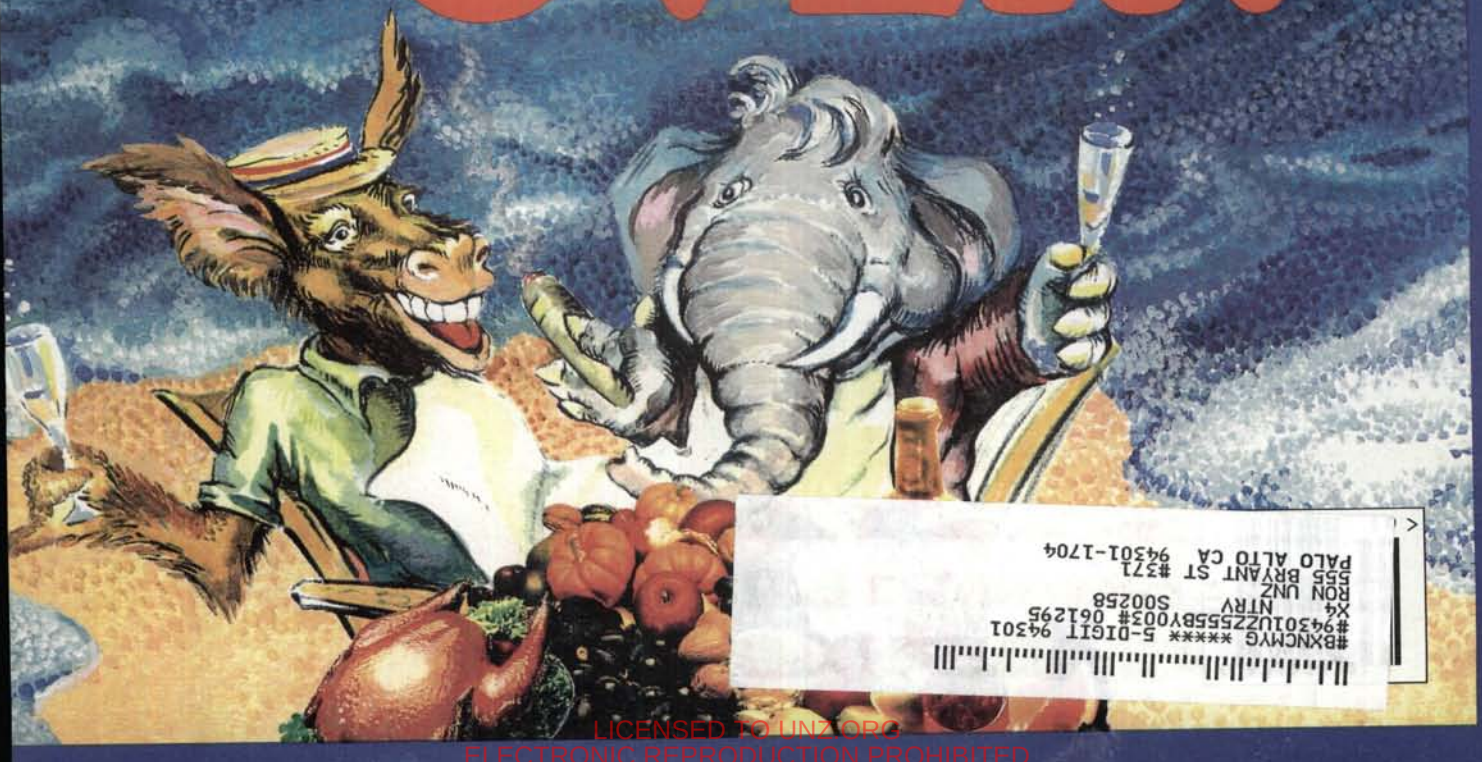

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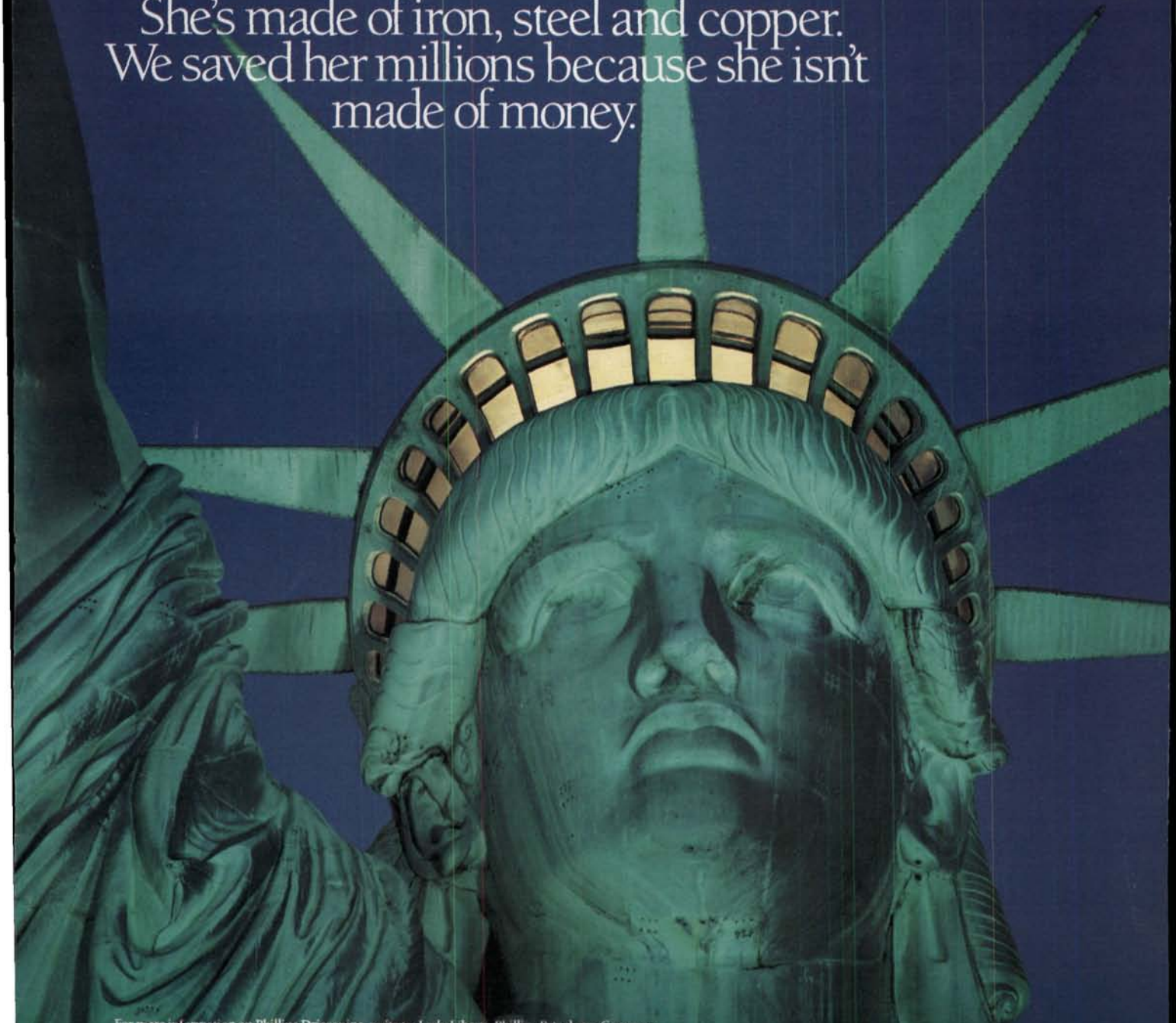

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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Letters

Cold World Sleaze

George Gilder ["Breaking the Box," Aug. 15] asserts optimistically that the impending computer information explosions will break the tyranny of the television networks and revitalize community and popular conservative thought.

But does Mr. Gilder really think that a nation of computer addicts will be any more willing to exercise its democratic authority? While the "teleputer" will provide information currently inaccessible, it will further the separation of our population from the traditional habits and values that lie at the core of true conservatism. Mr. Gilder envisions a world in which "[f]amilies will regroup around the evolving silicon hearths of a new cottage economy." In its infancy the television was just the family congregator that Mr. Gilder describes, so how long will it take the burgeoning computer networks to devolve into the intellectual brothels that television has become?

What the computer networks really provide is a shiny but cold world remote from the intimacies of traditional person-to-person conduct. Each hacker is the master of his machine; he can—as Mr. Gilder adumbrates—fully satisfy his intellectual and animal desires without leaving his chair. Is this really the sublime feat that Mr. Gilder presents it as? Or is it rather a sign of personal diminution? "[C]omputer technology amplifies both the intelligence of its owners and their power to choose and create," writes Mr. Gilder sounding like a dope addict describing heroin. So why has the preponderance of computerized creations been so devoid of refinement and artistic merit? Is it not individual labor rather than technological facilitation that spawns creativity?

Though I may be left behind, Mr. Gilder can have his nation of "teleputers"—I'll be reading under a tree.

Gregory M. Davis
Falmouth, Mass.

Conservatism cannot survive unless it learns to use the dominant technologies of the age. Without new technology, a world of ten billion people will collapse in famine and war. Gregory Davis can while away the decade with me under a tree reading books only if he inherits wealth, or contrives a way to become a parasite on a host economy driven by microelectronics. Otherwise he will be poor, and the culture will be shaped by those who master the microcosm. Mr. Davis has given up on the teleputer. He thinks it is shiny, cold, and addictive—images from the machine age. The essense of this technology is to allow individual humans, in intimate communication, to bypass centralized governments and media bureaucracies of all kinds. Teleputers grant control to the customers—they can encrypt and filter the flows as they wish, or create new ones, systematically barring the way to all pedophiles and panderers. As always, many people will spurn this opportunity and debauch themselves; they will tend to die young and poor then as now. The disciplined and productive will inherit the future. So what else is new? —GG

Disastrous Van Buren?

I was startled to read in Mr. O'Sullivan's essay [Aug. 29] an approval of the absurd opinion of Ramesh Ponnuru that Martin Van Buren was "good for the country," on the grounds that he removed an inflationary banking system.

Andrew Jackson and Vice President Van Buren did destroy the Second Bank of the United States. This Bank was a successor to the First Bank, which was established by Congress at the request of President Washington, but in the face of opposition from Jefferson and Madison. As intended, it successfully established a sound national currency.

President Madison allowed it to lapse in 1811. An inflationary monetary climate ensued. By 1816, there was a national consensus to re-establish it, and thus the Second Bank was founded. Again the Bank admirably performed its task of creating a sound national currency. However, President Jackson vetoed extension of the Bank's charter. It ceased existence in 1836; resulting in a severe inflation. This produced the Panic of 1837, which ushered in a depression lasting the entire Van Buren Administration (1837–1841) and beyond. Van Buren was a disaster!

Melvyn Suplee
Bellmawr, N.J.

Madison erred, not in letting the First Bank expire, but in subsequently placing federal deposits in state banks, which then recklessly expanded note issue. Hence the "inflationary climate" Mr. Suplee mentions. The Second Bank was chartered to end this turbulence, but instead it quickly expanded and then contracted the money supply. The Bank was therefore widely (probably unfairly) blamed for the Panic of 1819. Later, the Bank deliberately instigated financial panics for political reasons. After it died, Van Buren accepted the placement of deposits in state banks as a halfway house while seeking to let the Treasury house federal deposits itself, thus separating bank and state completely.

My own view—and that of Van Buren allies like Senator Thomas Hart Benton—is that the Panic of 1837 was caused by the transfer of the federal budget surplus from state banks to state governments. As Richard Timberlake recently established, this move forced the banking system to contract its loans substantially. —RP

AAUW Self-Defense

When it comes to accuracy in the media, Mary Lefkowitz's "Robbery in Progress" [July 11] has been stripped of facts, leaving it flush with the fiction that Christina Hoff Sommers uses to sell her book, *Who Stole Feminism?* Despite their dark warnings of feminist thieves, the real crime is how the compliant media repeat whatever they are fed without bothering to check the facts.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) takes great pride in its research. For every research project commissioned, AAUW relies on teams of scholars for guidance. In addition to the academic community, AAUW works in partnership with parents and educators including the National Education Association and the National Association of State Boards of Education to effect positive change for women and girls.

It is a shame that Professor Lefkowitz can't get the most basic facts straight. The so-called Wellesley Report is actually entitled *The AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls*. And while Professor Lefkowitz attributes to AAUW its poll on self-esteem, which she questions, she conveniently fails to attribute to AAUW its sexual-harassment survey, which she praises.

Like Professor Sommers, Professor Lefkowitz frequently stops short of giving the full story. She states, for example, that boys have a higher dropout rate. True, but boys are more likely to return to school or get their GED. When girls drop out, they stay out. She also notes

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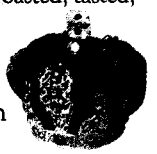

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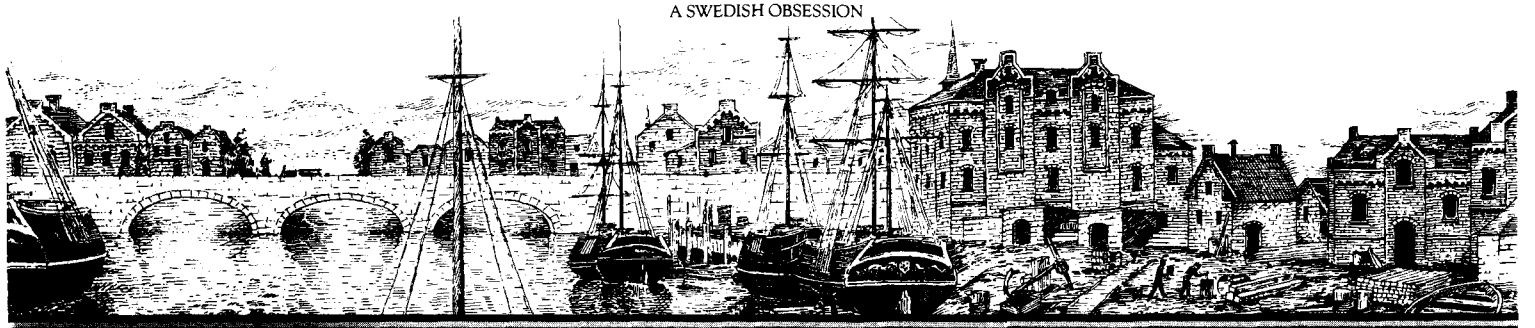

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that girls get higher grades, but fails to mention that boys have outscored girls on the SAT for over 20 years. And while the math gap is decreasing, the science gap continues to grow.

As for the absurd charge that AAUW's research disparages lateral or analytical thinking for girls, a glance at the actual AAUW report proves that this claim is a gross mischaracterization. *One* study out of 1,331 studies reviewed in *The AAUW Report* calls for a more diverse curriculum that allows students to use *both* their vertical and lateral thinking skills.

Indeed, AAUW values those analytical thinking skills, which is why we sponsor math camps, science fairs, and mentoring programs for girls across the country. We award $2.75 million in grants and fellowships to women completing their dissertations and conducting thesis research. And the majority of the AAUW fellowships are given to women in technologically advanced fields such as engineering, astronomy, and computer science.

So while Professor Lefkowitz obediently parrots Professor Sommers's divisive soundbites and hyperbolic rhetoric, AAUW will work to ensure that this nation provides the best possible education for all its children.

Anne L. Bryant,
Executive Director, AAUW
Washington, D.C.

Ms. Bryant assures us that the AAUW worked with "teams of scholars" in arriving at its celebrated conclusion that the nation's schoolgirls are being "shortchanged," their self-esteem drained, their futures compromised. But in Who Stole Feminism? *I spent two chapters carefully examining the AAUW studies, finding defects that impugn the validity of the entire research project. Take, for example, this much cited AAUW claim:*

"In a study conducted by Myra and David Sadker, boys in elementary and middle school called out answers eight more times than girls. When boys called out, teachers listened, but when girls called out, they were told 'raise your hand if you want to speak.'"

Ms. Bryant's "teams of scholars" seem not to have noticed that no such study exusts. The research they cite—but do not quote—found just the opposite:

"Boys, particularly low achieving boys, receive eight to ten times as many reprimands as do their female classmates . . . . When both girls and boys are misbehaving equally, boys still receive more frequent discipline."

Ms. Bryant complains that Professor Lefkowitz and I "stop short of telling the full story." If the AAUW had told the full story, they would have admitted that girls' mean SAT scores are lowered by the fact that more girls than boys are now taking the test. They would tell us that in the 1990 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test given to a representative sample of all 17-year-old students—not just to the two-fifths of high-school seniors who take the SAT—males outperformed females by only 3 points in math and 11 points in science, while girls outperformed boys by 13 points in reading and 24 points in writing. Contrary to what Ms. Bryant says, the NAEP Trend Scale shows a narrowing of the science gap for girls and a widening of the reading gap for boys.

Campaigns to help "shortchanged" girls have social consequences. Two recent articles in the London Sunday Times *(June 19 and July 10) point out that after some decades of intense gender-equity activism, "Girls are suddenly racing ahead of boys in almost all levels of achievement . . . It's a social phenomenon that is stunning everyone." The* Times *reports National Curriculum tests showing that 14-year-old British boys are "on average more than three full years behind girls in English" and warns of the prospect of "an underclass of permanently unemployed, unskilled men."*

American education is moving in the same direction, with girls outperforming boys in nearly every area. Girls now account for 55 per cent of college enrollments. Diane Ravitch wryly wonders when the point of feminist "equity" will finally be reached: when American colleges and universities are 70 per cent female?

Ms. Bryant says that the AAUW "reviewed" 1,331 studies in arriving at its conclusions. But not one of these studies supports the AAUW's basic claim that academic and career achievement are positively tied to what the AAUW is measuring as "self-esteem." Indeed, their evidence suggests that high self-esteem may be associated with low academic performance! African-American female students are relatively at risk academically, yet the AAUW found they have much higher self-esteem than the allegedly favored white males. Can Ms. Bryant explain why this should be so? Can she explain why, in publicizing its findings, the AAUW never mentioned its findings about African-American males? These highest-risk students were found to have by far the highest "self-esteem" of all.

Ms. Bryant would like to deny that the AAUW studies disparage analytical thinking associated with "male ways of kowing." But on page 65 of the AAUW/Wellesley Report we read:

"In the upper grades especially, the curriculum narrows and definitions of knowing take on gender-specific and culture-specific qualities associated with Anglo–European male values."

Peggy McIntosh, one of the principal investigators for the AAUW's second report, offers workshops in which she warns about the dangers of white male "vertical" thinking—"especially in the nuclear age." Verticals, she says, are logical and exact and are concerned with excellence and achievement. By contrast "lateral" thinkers aim for "a decent relationship to the invisible elements of the universe." Ms. McIntosh's views are extensively excerpted in the AAUW report. Indeed, several of the AAUW's consultants and researchers are leading figures in the "women's ways of knowing" school.

This school has received mixed reviews even from feminist scholars but it provides the philosophical basis of the AAUW's report on how girls—deprived of an education grounded in "lateral," women's way of knowing—are being demoralized and miseducated in a male dominated system.

The AAUW reports are methodologically unsound and internally inconsistent—an unhappy example of what happens when women adopt lateral ways of knowing. Ms. Bryant, who would now like to dissociate the AAUW from the embarrassingly anti-intellectual views of her co-workers, declares that she too values rigorous, "vertical" analytic thinking. But then the "male" vertical standards kick in—and with them the obdurate verdict that the AAUW reports are unacceptably substandard. Ms. Bryant cannot have it both ways. —CHS

"I busted the lamp."

Fruity

All right, who's the wise guy who put the ad for "Heavenly Fruitcakes" on the same page as the review of the book *Same-Sex Unions* (Aug. 29, p. 59)?

Paul Nix
Summit, N.J.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Religious Wars

■ Conor Cruise O'Brien's article on Northern Ireland in our last issue gave a more realistic account in advance of the IRA ceasefire than the American media managed after it. Since he proved so prescient, what does he predict now?

Writing in the London *Independent*, he forecasts that the IRA will establish its rule of Catholic areas by intimidation, stimulate street protests, civil disobedience, and marches, provoke attacks on such marches by loyalists, seek by these methods to draw the British Army into skirmishes with both loyalists and nationalists, and cite these conflicts to justify calling off the "complete cessation" when the time is ripe. Should the British Army eventually withdraw under fire from both sides, the IRA would then launch a Bosnia-style war of ethnic cleansing.

This strategy of reprisal, counter-reprisal, and mass slaughter is known in IRA-speak as "One More Push."

■ Liberaldom is so hostile to evangelical Christianity that it feels this hostility to be almost universal. Hence, when Democrats pondered attacking conservative Christians, the media sent up no warning flares. Inside the Beltway, where God appears only on the currency, it seemed plain common sense.

So when the Dems rushed out warning Christians to stay out of politics or be declared unconstitutional, they were astonished to discover they had said something "controversial."

A little history might have saved them. In his masterly attack on Southey's *Colloquies*, Macaulay describes how an earlier establishment deceived itself about the power of religious dissent:

"The Report of the state of the Province of Canterbury, delivered by [Archbishop] Laud to his master [King Charles I] at the close of 1649, represents the Church of England as in the highest and most palmy state . . . It is confessed that there was a little difficulty in bringing some of the vulgar in Suffolk to take the sacrament at the rails in the chancel. This was the only open instance of non-conformity which the vigilant eye of Laud could detect in all the dioceses . . . on the very eve of a revolution in which primate, and church, and monarch, and monarchy were to perish together."

Macaulay then draws a moral: "[Is] anything more terrible than the situation of a government which rules . . . over a people of hypocrites, which is flattered by the press and cursed in the inner chambers?"

So all those liberal journalists who suffer anguish over how badly they treat Mr. Clinton can relax. If they were right, they'd be doing him a favor.

■ Michael Vlahos in this *NR* cites gun control as an issue separating most Americans from a corrupt national elite that sustains Liberaldom. So how does he explain the opinion polls that suggest majority support for it? Here is a paragraph space forced us to omit:

"Gun control is the perfect Potemkin Village for the elite class of both parties. The question is always framed as, 'Are you in favor of gun control?' And the response, not surprisingly, is, Yes. But Frank Luntz's careful focus-group discussion reveals that, by margins of 3 or 4 to 1, regular Americans a) don't really think gun control reduces crime, b) support it only because it seems better than doing nothing, and c) if offered something tangible in place of gun control, like mandatory sentences and no parole for violent offenders, go for it in a second. Americans don't want gun control; they want crime control."

Here is a simple way to test Mr. Vlahos's argument. How would congressmen vote on legislation to impose draconian sentences for crimes committed with firearms? If in favor, they may genuinely want to control crime. If against, they are at best indifferent.

As it happens, such a law was proposed as part of the alleged Crime Bill. The Potemkin Democrats kept it out.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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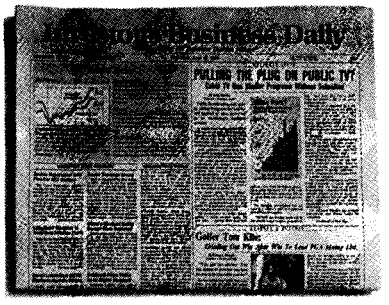

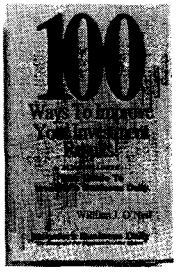

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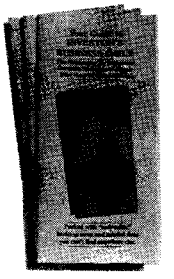

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FOR THE RECORD

■ After crime-bill tangle and health-care setback, **Bill Clinton**'s newest worry: talk of possible primary declaration next year by Sen. **Bob Kerrey** (D., Neb.). "Certainly, the Kerrey talk is everywhere," said former presidential candidate **Paul Tsongas**. In widely circulated AP dispatch, Kerrey acknowledged "there is a break" with Clinton and "we're not close" but said he didn't see himself making run. Then added: "But I have learned never to say never." . . . Less surprising are now-constant **Jesse Jackson** threats of primary or even independent run. . . . Clinton's August vacation turned out to be no day at the beach. Martha's Vineyard tangles included attempts by summer White House to deal with *Boston Globe* suggestions **Al Gore** is distancing himself from Prez, TV pictures of **Hillary** being burned in effigy by angry Kentucky crowd (over tobacco tax), and more newsmaking by Administration's social-issues disaster area, Surgeon General **Joycelyn Elders**. Elders's statements that son's drug offenses (10-year sentence) weren't a crime brought headlines and bitter criticism from anti-drug groups. Final irritant was controversy over presidential golf cart. White House got angry calls saying that nightly TV shots of Bill-buddy **Vernon Jordan** driving Clinton on links made black leader Jordan look like chauffeur in movie *Driving Miss Daisy*. A few days of that and Prez was driving Jordan. . . . Real vacation spoiler, though, was uproar over UN's Cairo population conference. Democrats' point man on November congressional races, former Rep. **Tony Coelho** (D., Calif.), frantically warned White House that public dispute with Pope could cost Democrats Catholic swing votes. (Loss of ethnic Catholics in industrial states—the **Reagan** Democrats—cost **George Bush** '92 race.) After Vatican spokesmen directly refuted VP Gore's claim that UN documents didn't call for abortion rights, Bishop **John McHugh** told NBC's *Meet the Press* that American Catholics may "walk away from the Democratic Party as well as the Clinton Administration." Black eye worsened with arrival in Cairo of U.S. delegation members and fem-extremists Rep. **Patricia Schroeder** (D., Colo.), **Bella Abzug**, and, yes, **Jane Fonda**.

■ August crime-bill fight may pay November dividends for GOP: **Harris** poll shows voters believe, by 54 to 42 per cent, legislation had too much pork and won't fight crime. Justice Dept. also forced to admit that language in Democrats' original bill would have released 40,000 drug offenders. . . . *Washington Times* editorial suggested that—just as House Dems who helped Reagan in Eighties were called "Boll Weevils"—appropriate term for moderate GOPers who gave Clinton crime-bill victory is "Cockroach Republicans." One such Clinton-helper, Rep. **Fred Upton** (R., Mich.), was "visibly shaken" after being booed off stage at GOP state convention in Grand Rapids. Another crime-bill defector, **John Kasich** (R., Ohio), may also pay price. Conservative stalwart Rep. **Dana Rohrabacher** (R., Calif.) says Rep. **Christopher Cox** (R., Calif.) should replace Kasich as head of GOP budget caucus. . . . Crime-bill fallout is heating up chances that GOP senators will make fight of Clinton nomination of lenient-on-crime Judge **H. Lee Sarokin** to Court of Appeals. "The most liberal member of the federal bench," says *New Jersey Law Journal*. . . . GOP may also make issue of two constitutional amendments. Naturalized Americans are calling for amendment to protect flag from desecration, and some GOP insiders see "values" wedge by combining flag and prayer-in-school issues. House GOP Whip **Newt Gingrich** being urged to include both amendments, immensely popular in polls but opposed by House Democrats, as part of Republican "Contract with America" during Sept. 27 ceremony on U.S. Capitol steps.

■ Hollywood's right-on summer? Final box-office tallies show **Disney**'s *Lion King*, *Clear and Present Danger* from book by **Tom Clancy**, **Arnold Schwarzenegger**'s *True Lies*, and *Forrest Gump* were mega-hits despite criticism from Left for political incorrectness. Conservative columnists **Pat Buchanan** and **Richard Grenier** particularly liked *Gump* for its focus on tawdry Sixties anti-war mentality. *Barcelona*, which made fun of anti-Americanism—by Oscar nominee and sometime conservative journalist **Whit Stillman**—also got raves from critics (except *NR*'s art-before-politics **John Simon**.) . . . Bucking trend, though, was HBO, which continued hard-left propaganda forays disguised as made-for-cable movies. August release, *The Enemy Within*, was about takeover of U.S. Govt. by treacherous military and dastardly right-wingers.

■ North Korea's **Kim Jong Il** has written to **Jimmy Carter** asking him to intervene again in nuclear-arms controversy with United States. . . . Germany's ups and downs: Israel now backing Bonn's quest for permanent seat on United Nations Security Council. But heavy tax burden for social welfare is discouraging German work ethic; Americans outwork Germans by 15 per cent says *Business Week*. . . . Russian President **Boris Yeltsin** saying he will not relent on privatizing state health-care system. . . . In final pullout from Baltic states Russian troops stripped barracks bare, leaving only piles of old tomes by **Marx** and **Lenin**.

■ N.Y. Gov. **Mario Cuomo** on Democrats' campaign woes: "People are in an extremely negative mood. They are looking to blame. They are eager to hit whatever head comes through the canvas at the carnival."

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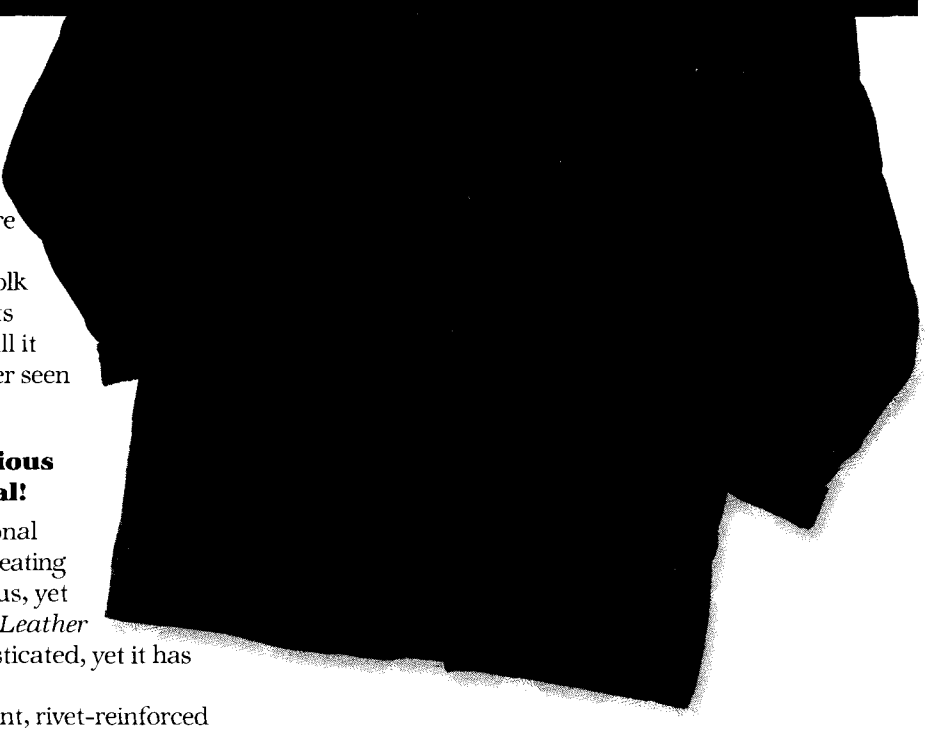

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THE WEEK

■ Groping for excuses for his ouster, Ben Chavis missed the best one of all. He should have said the only reason the NAACP fired him is that he's black.

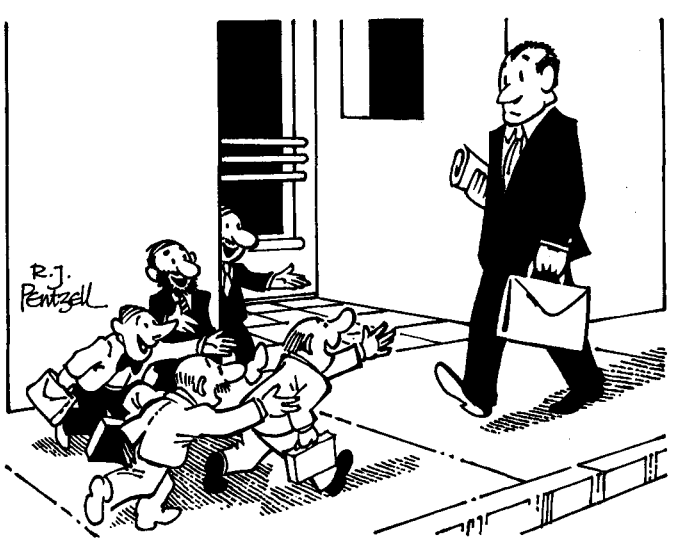
■ The ten-point package of reforms that House Republicans will announce on the steps of the Capitol September 27 is close to completion. This "Contract with America" is meant to represent the legislation Republicans will pass in the first 100 days of the next Congress if they win a majority. The congressmen deserve points for moving in the right direction (the welfare-reform package, for one, is tougher than the leadership's original proposal) and for realizing that merely being anti-Clinton can carry them only so far. The package apparently contains numerous tax-relief measures (a child tax credit, elimination of the marriage penalty, a rollback of Mr. Clinton's Social Security tax hike, beefed-up IRAs), some supply-side elixir (a capital-gains tax cut and indexation), meaningful congressional reforms (cutting committee staff by a third, applying laws to Congress), term limits, legal reforms, as well as old stand-bys like the line-item veto. This would all make fine legislation. But bolder would have been better. Why not an assault on overall *tax rates*? And why do the House Republicans maintain their shifty silence on affirmative-action quotas and on immigration? They respond that in dueling with a President now almost synonymous with the unfulfilled promise, they want to focus on the strictly attainable. Well and good. But by the time the Republicans have attained the attainable, the voters may have thought the unthinkable.

■ In 1969 President Nixon signed an executive order that gave union officials the exclusive right to represent all federal workers, whether or not they chose to join a union. Now the Clinton Administration wants to force government employees to pay for this representation. The National Partnership Council, a labor-relations panel appointed as part of Al Gore's plan to "reinvent" government and increase its efficiency, has called for legislation that would require all federal workers to pay union dues as a condition of employment. If Mr. Gore is really interested in efficiency, he should eliminate the middleman: just force workers to pay their dues directly to the Democratic Party.

■ Senators Chafee, Danforth, and Kassebaum may never be contestants on *Name That Tune*, but if they are and the tune they have to identify is "Solidarity Forever," they won't have a clue.

■ Two planned projects—one for low-income housing in Berkeley, the other for the mentally ill homeless in Manhattan—drew squawks of protest even in those liberal neighborhoods. Whereupon local poverty activists complained to the Department of Housing and Urban Development that the protestors were guilty of discrimination under the Fair Housing Act. HUD sought to examine the diaries and telephone messages of the recalcitrant residents until early this month, when Roberta Achtenberg, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, decided that the imperatives of the welfare state did not yet take precedence over the rights to speak, petition, and assemble. So ended round one. But the poverty entrepreneurs, who make their money by building and running such facilities, will be back, probably in court. And why not? When judges can be found who rule that panhandling is protected as free speech, why not hope for a judge who will rule that speech is unlawful discrimination?

■ It's time for a revision in the standard conservative explanation of liberal white solicitude toward certain minority groups. It isn't guilt that's driving them to secure the fortunes—and they are *fortunes*—of some Northeastern Indian tribes. Connecticut's Governor Lowell Weicker has agreed to grant the Mohegans and the Mashantucket Pequots a monopoly on gambling in his state. In New York, Democratic legislators quashed the effort of a Republican lawmaker to legalize gambling in the Catskills and on riverboats—a move that would have threatened the profits of the huge Pequot gambling complex across the border in Connecticut. Governor Weicker cut his deal in return for $160 million in contributions by the two tribes to the state bud-



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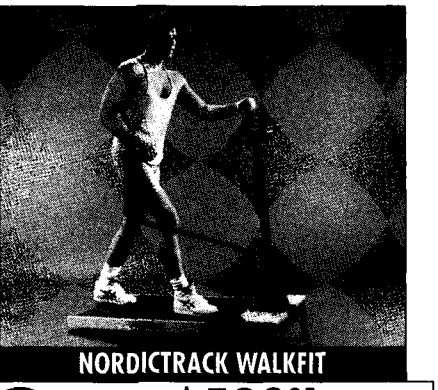

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get. In New York, the *New York Post* reports that the Pequots made a quieter donation of $100,000 to the state Democratic Party—just as the legislature happened to be considering the issue of legalized gambling. What other peace pipes are Democrats smoking with Injun chiefs? That question suggested itself recently when it came out that the fifth largest contributor to the national Democratic Party is none other than . . . the 307-member Pequot Indian tribe. This is very curious. And yet our fearless national media seem indifferent to what might be a quite delicious scandal. But no, it's not likely that Indians are lining the pockets of the *New York Times*. There, no doubt, the standard explanation applies.

■ Jesse Jackson says he may oppose Bill Clinton for the Presidency in 1996. Reverend Jackson should have fun making campaign speeches. There are so many words that rhyme with "slick."

■ Covering the murder of an NBC stagehand by a deranged man from North Carolina, the *New York Times* reported that the killer's semiautomatic rifle, a scary-looking "assault weapon," could not be legally imported and that the 30-shot magazine it carried "would be banned under the crime bill passed last month." Representative Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.), a sponsor of the crime bill, declared: "This shooting tragically illustrates the importance of the assault-weapon ban and the outlawing of clips holding more than 10 bullets." In the course of his assault-weapon-induced rampage, the killer fired a total of one round. Try to do *that* with a revolver.

■ As *NR* warned (see Lawrence Goldmuntz, "Multilateral MADness," August 15), the Clinton Administration has continued to negotiate with the Russians on amendments to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that would foreclose the most promising—and urgently necessary—technologies for defense against rogue states with ballistic missiles. According to the Center for Security Policy, the Russians last month offered to amend their earlier proposal, which would have closed off U.S. technological options. These concessions turned out to be purely cosmetic, but the U.S. negotiator cabled to Washington that they should be accepted. (Washington fortunately deferred action.) Meanwhile, Administration officials are lobbying congressional Republicans to reassure them that U.S. interests are being protected. (An NSC staffer reported to his superiors that he had Senator John Warner "in my pocket.") But most Republicans have pledged to fight any amendments that would trade away our right to an effective missile defense, and they are not biting.

■ The last straw for Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori came when he discovered the First Lady in her back room cooking up a health-care plan with Ira Magaziner. No, just kidding. But the Fujimoris have broken new ground in President/First Lady relations. The President, infuriated by his wife's public criticisms of his administration (and by her rumored interest in succeeding him), fired her as First Lady, moved himself and the children out of the Presidential Palace, and cut off the water, electricity, and phones to her wing. He also introduced legislation to bar members of a President's family from running for national office. We North Americans should never be too proud to learn from our sophisticated neighbors to the south.

■ It's good to know that President Clinton has expert advice in refining his Cuba policy. He checks every step of the way with Secretary of State Lawton Chiles.

■ Talk radio evolved to fill a market niche the liberal media ignored, and liberaldom is not taking the growing ideological diversity well. The counterattack has focused on Rush Limbaugh; and the main weapon has been a "study" by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), last seen abetting the more-women-are-battered-on-Super-Bowl-Sunday myth. FAIR has charged Mr. Limbaugh with 43 instances of "sloppiness, ignorance, or fabrication." Considering that Mr. Limbaugh has logged over 4,000 hours on the air, 43 mistakes would be a pretty good record; how does FAIR's record compare? Moreover, many of what FAIR calls "distortions" are simply matters of opinion, such as: "Women were doing quite well in this country before feminism came along" or "$14,400 for a family of four. That's not so bad." FAIR also counts obvious slips of the tongue, as when Mr. Limbaugh said that Iran–Contra had resulted in "not one indictment" instead of "not one conviction." Other Limbaugh "errors" are inconveniently true, or at least debatable. FAIR attempts to refute Mr. Limbaugh's statement that "the poorest people in America are better off than the mainstream families of Europe" as inaccurate by comparing incomes rather than assets or expenditures (the poorest quintile of Americans spend more than twice their reported incomes); by using official exchange rates

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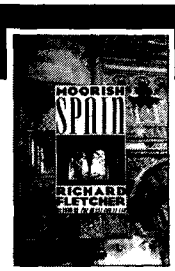

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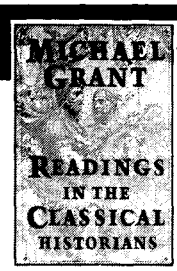

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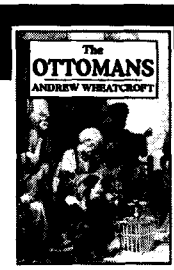

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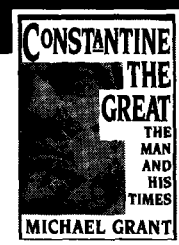

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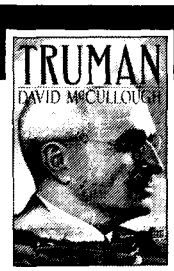

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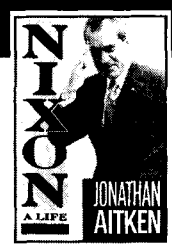

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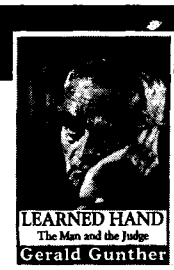

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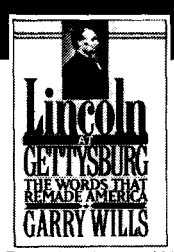

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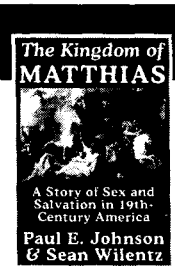

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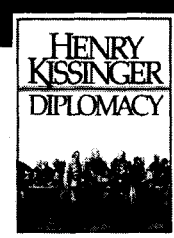

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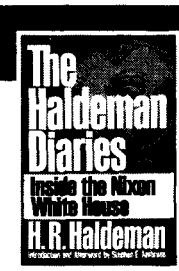

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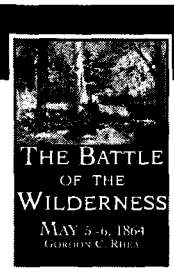

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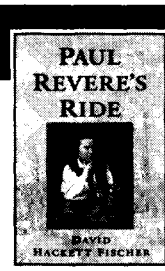

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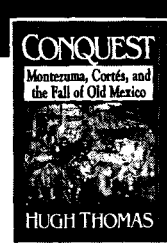

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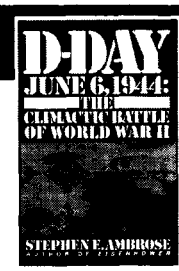

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rather than purchasing power to convert European incomes to dollar terms; and by excluding Greece and the populous poor countries of Eastern Europe. None of these flaws in FAIR's study prevented the *Washington Post*, the *L.A. Times*, *Newsweek*, and *The New Republic* from repeating its charges uncritically. Nor did these publications note the extremism of FAIR's suggestion that legal action be taken against stations that carry Mr. Limbaugh ("They can be held accountable if they broadcast falsehood"). Worse yet, conservative journalist Cliff Kincaid wrote a *Washington Post* op-ed piece that approvingly cited this shoddy research and landed a few low blows of his own (of the "How can a divorcé, preach family values?" variety). Mr. Kincaid has a legitimate gripe: Mr. Limbaugh mischaracterized an article of his in *Human Events* and has yet to set the record straight. Mutual apologies are in order. Conservatives are, as Mr. Limbaugh surely knows, unfairly held to higher standards than other public figures—but should try to meet them nonetheless.

■ In Guyana, several amazed police officers had to step in to curtail the activities of a monkey who had been breaking into homes, putting on lipstick and condoms, and upsetting people with his lewd gestures. No word about where he got the idea. (Bet he had a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.)

■ Cubans being returned to Guantanamo have something in common with the Clinton health-care plan. They're both just about back where they started.

Unhealthy Alternative

SUPPORTERS of a radical health-care overhaul lost the argument about whether there's a health-care crisis, so they have moved to a fall-back position: creating one. The bipartisan Chafee–Breaux "incremental" proposal—the last best chance for government-run health care this year—would undermine the nation's health-care system, and create a whole new class of welfare dependents in the process. That Chafee–Breaux is called "moderate" is testimony only to the revolutionary implications of the benchmark, the original Clinton plan.

Under Chafee–Breaux, Americans would in effect be forced to turn in their current health insurance for a package of standard benefits that employers would be obliged to arrange for, but not necessarily to pay for. (Supplementary insurance would be available, but highly regulated.) Meanwhile, the plan's community-rating provisions would prohibit insurers from varying premiums according to the insuree's age and medical condition.

Both these measures would tend to *reduce* the number of Americans with health insurance. Companies that now pay for plans less generous than Chafee–Breaux's standard package would not be permitted to do so: they would have to choose between paying more, or not paying at all. And community rating would increase rates for the young and healthy, prompting many of them—as it has done in New York—to drop coverage. The upshot could be that in 2002, when a new government commission would recommend ways to reach universal coverage, *fewer* Americans would be insured than today. The employer mandate might then look like the only way out of a health-insurance meltdown.

Chafee–Breaux rests its hopes for increasing coverage on huge new insurance subsidies for the poor and not-so-poor. The subsidies wouldn't phase out until a family's income reached 200 per cent of the poverty level (about $29,000 for a family of four). The immediate problem is how to pay for them. Chafee–Breaux claims to raise about $474 billion over ten years through Medicare cuts and increased taxes, including a 0.6 per cent tax on all insurance premiums and a 25 per cent tax on the priciest premiums. About $20 billion of that would go to sundry other programs, another $100 billion to deficit reduction. That leaves about $350 billion for a subsidy program whose cost in the roughly comparable Finance Committee bill was estimated at $900 billion. It's obvious that Senator Chafee's "mainstream" group will have to dip into its list of other funding options, which includes delaying the indexation of income brackets, raising the corporate tax rate to 36 per cent, and jacking up cigarette and alcohol taxes.

The more fundamental problem with the subsidy program (one it shares with the new Rowland–Bilirakis legislation in the House) is that it threatens to force low-income working people out of their jobs and onto the dole. Under these plans, if you're anywhere near the poverty line, you lose money by earning it—because your insurance subsidies are taken away. If you combine the phase-outs of the Earned Income Tax Credit, of food stamps, and of Chafee–Breaux/Rowland–Bilirakis subsidies, then the after-tax difference between an annual income of $32,000

During the Recess

The canary has yet to be swallowed,
But Republicans, wearing a smile
That extends from incisors to molars,
Have been waving the Whitewater file,
While in barber shops, bars, and receptions
They've been playing the Hillary card
As the freshmen do flip-flops like hubby
Over barbecues in the backyard.

W. H. VON DREELE

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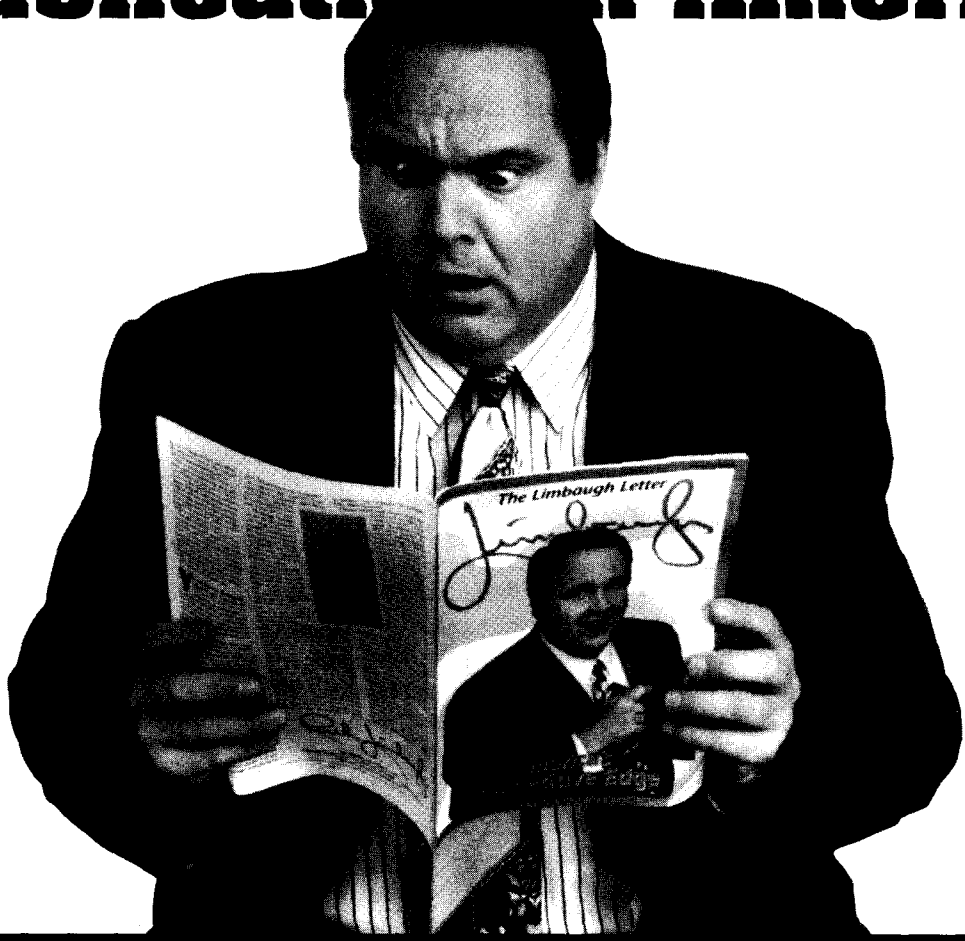

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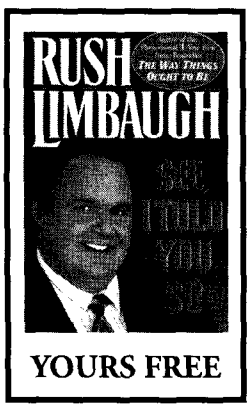

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and one of $16,000 is almost zero; the marginal tax rate in these income ranges reaches 80 to 90 per cent. So why work?

This is perversely effective legislation: it would create not just a health-care crisis, but a welfare crisis too. And Congress, when it gets back from its recess, could do it all in just a month! Going to the voters empty-handed never looked so good.

A Newer Deal

TAX POLITICS are back in the news, as some of President Clinton's advisors are urging him to cut taxes on the middle class and thus repair his most significant broken campaign promise. Prominent among the proposals is a $300 child credit, estimated to cost roughly $14 billion. This is opposed by Administration deficit hawks Leon Panetta, Robert Rubin, and Alice Rivlin, but it is much favored by political consultants James Carville and Paul Begala, who are fearful of electoral backlash on both the character issue and the economy. But Republicans have already pre-empted this with a $500 child credit proposed earlier this year by House budget leader John Kasich and endorsed by Newt Gingrich.

The trouble with both proposals is their use of the tax code for social policy; child credits would not alter incentives to work, save, or invest. While *NR* is strongly committed to traditional family values, and is always willing to support tax cuts that force genuine budget restraint, there are better tax policies that could promote economic growth *and* traditional values such as work, thrift, and family.

Remember, on average, payroll tax is a greater burden to middle-class families than income tax. Under current law a married couple with two children is exempt from income tax on the first $16,150 (using the standard deduction or personal exemptions), then pays a 15 per cent marginal tax rate on income above that level. However, these same people are subject to the payroll tax *from the very first dollar earned*, at a rate of 15.3 per cent if self-employed, or 7.65 per cent if not. This burden, which has been steadily rising for over twenty years to support growing entitlements (Medicare, Social Security, and unemployment compensation), is an enormous discouragement to work effort and entrepreneurship for *all* people, including middle-class families and family-owned businesses. Not coincidentally, it is exactly this group that is increasingly restless with both major political parties and looking for a better deal elsewhere.

Admittedly, social and economic policies in recent years have assaulted families and traditional values. Also, it is true that the $600 personal exemption in place back in 1948 would, if adjusted for cost-of-living increases, be worth roughly $3,600 today rather than the actual $2,450 (though the exemption was raised twice in the Reagan years). Hence *NR* has looked favorably on child credits, if only as a last resort. As a first resort, however, payroll-tax relief is the most economically efficient way to raise employment, wages, income, and growth. Stephen Entin, resident scholar at the Institute for Research on the Economics of Taxation, argues that the ever-rising payroll tax (along with weakened write-offs for business investment in plant and equipment, a higher capital-gains tax, three new upper-end income-tax brackets, a phase-out of personal exemptions and itemized business deductions, and a tax increase on Social Security benefits) has created a "powerful regulatory obstacle that has lowered the current economic recovery rate to only one-half the speed of the 1980s expansion."

For whatever reasons, the Republicans have seemingly given up on repealing the anti-growth tax increases of 1990 and 1993, and neither they nor the Democrats appear willing to discuss the lethal onslaught of ever-growing entitlements and the rising payroll-tax burden necessary to fund them. With the Medicare funds careening toward insolvency, and Democrats proposing to enlarge their obligations by nationalizing health care, the twenty-first century U.S. economy will be strangled. At the same time, Americans have learned full well that self-invested retirement plans are vastly outperforming the shrinking pension rate of return available under Social Security. One of these days the U.S. must be unshackled from the disabling economic and social legacies of the New Deal and the Great Society. Band-aids may give temporary relief, but they are not the answer.

Invisible Victims

'MOVING toward peace in Ulster," judged the *Washington Post* editorial, urging Congress (which needed no urging) to reassure London and Dublin that "Americans applauded their step toward peace." "The deal offers a chance at peace," added a *New York Times* editorial, describing it as "ingenious" and "creative" into the bargain.

Such were the hosannas that greeted the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. They were reprised in December of last year when Britain's John Major and Ireland's Albert Reynolds produced a *second* Anglo-Irish agreement called the Downing Street Declaration (actually a third if you count the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement, as you should). And they are being sung yet again to celebrate the announcement by the IRA of a "complete cessation of military activities" expected to usher in negotiations among London, Dublin, and constitutional (i.e. non-violent) political parties, including Sinn Fein and its president, Gerry Adams, on the future of Northern Ireland.

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A reminder is in order. The results of the 1985 Agreement were not "peace," nor anything like it. They were continued violence by the IRA, greatly increased violence by loyalist terrorists, and complete stalemate between the political parties in Northern Ireland. After some years, the British and Irish governments drew from this failure the conclusion that another such initiative was required. On this occasion, however, the IRA has called a "ceasefire." Why?

Nothing would be more gratifying than clear evidence that the Sinn Fein–IRA has had a change of heart and committed itself to peaceful democratic politics. But Sinn Fein is not a political party in any normal sense; it is the political wing of a terrorist movement. Its democratic credentials are that it gets 2 per cent of the vote in the Irish Republic and 10 per cent in Northern Ireland. The sole basis of its claim to be included in negotiations is that its associates in the IRA murder people. If they did not do so, Gerry Adams would not be interviewed respectfully by journalists,

Right Data

Don't Blame Johnny

THIS YEAR'S crop of high-school seniors had the same average SAT scores as last year's—902 out of a possible 1,600. That's the good news. The bad news is that the modest rebound under way since 1980 has stalled.

Apologists insist that scores are down because the fraction of students taking the test is up. Perhaps: 42 per cent of seniors took the SAT in 1994, and 43 per cent (a record) last year. But average scores managed to rise between 1952 and 1963 even as the share of test-taking seniors exploded from 7 per cent to 30 per cent. Scores fell during the 1970s although fewer students took the test.

Admittedly, minorities now account for 31 per cent of all test takers, up from 15 per cent as recently as 1976. This should bias scores downward. On the other hand, the practice of "teaching to the test" is far more widespread today, as are supplementary preparation courses. And the test itself was recently overhauled, allegedly to emphasize academic preparation rather than innate ability. (In March the College Board tellingly changed the name of the test from Scholastic Aptitude Test to Scholastic Assessment Test.)

BEHIND THE DECLINE

	Average SAT Score	Spending per Pupil (1993 Dollars)	Pupil/ Teacher Ratio	Average School District Size
1960	975	$1,700	25.8	868 Pupils
1970	948	2,830	22.3	2,550
1980	890	3,835	18.7	2,570
1985	906	4,342	17.9	2,512
1990	900	5,193	17.2	2,682
1994	902	5,400	17.3	2,988

Sources: College Board, Dept. of Education

The quality question dominates discussions of American education. Less widely talked about is the productivity crisis gripping the education industry.

Spending per pupil, adjusted for inflation, more than tripled between 1960 and 1994. This implies a productivity decline of more than two-thirds, even if you assume—charitably—that the quality of educational output remained constant. In fact, the official spending figures are themselves suspect, omitting key items such as pension contributions, business and foundation donations, teacher training costs, out-of-pocket parental expenses, and the cost of federal programs not administered by the Department of Education, such as Head Start. A comprehensive analysis would undoubtedly find a still sharper productivity plunge.

International comparisons are equally grim. The U.S. spends more per student than any other G-7 nation, yet in 1991 our 13-year-olds came in last on science and math achievement tests given to virtually all students in those countries. Interestingly, American 9-year-olds outscored their foreign counterparts on the science test—a test given before they are taught this subject in school.

Smaller classes have long been touted as a solution, especially by teachers unions hungry for jobs. Well, class size, as indicated by the pupil/teacher ratio, has dropped by 33 per cent since 1960. Unfortunately, public-school districts also grew much larger during this period, the result of consolidation aimed at lowering costs.

Industrial workers gain efficiency in larger plants. Teachers don't. One reason: large school districts hire a disproportionate number of administrators who never set foot in a classroom but make extra work for teachers who do. Not surprisingly, 77 per cent of public-school teachers say they spend too much time on administrative tasks, compared to only 34 per cent of teachers in (generally smaller) Catholic schools, according to studies by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. and the National Catholic Education Association.

This helps explain why parochial schools, with about the same ethnic mix and costing one-third less per pupil, outscored public schools by 37 points on this year's SAT.

—ED RUBENSTEIN

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courted by delegations of distinguished Irish-Americans, and praised for his historic contribution to peace (i.e., promising that his accomplices will stop murdering people, at least for the moment).

Far more likely than a change of heart, therefore, is that Sinn Fein–IRA calculated that the British were war-weary and would make important concessions in return for a halt to violence, *however temporary*. That calculation looks likely to prove correct. Sinn Fein–IRA still withholds a "permanent cessation" of violence, which was supposedly an iron precondition for talks. It offers instead a "complete cessation," which in this context is a synonym for an "impermanent cessation." But the Brits are expected to accept a fudge.

If so, the talks will be conducted under the shadow of a threat: namely, that if Sinn Fein–IRA does not achieve its objectives in negotiations, it will resume terrorism. Since those objectives are incompatible with pledges to the Protestants from both governments, that means either the Protestants will be betrayed or the IRA will renew its murder campaign, probably the latter. In the meantime, it will employ forms of struggle such as street demonstrations and civil disobedience (a/k/a riots and intimidation) designed to create conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities and between British troops and loyalists. (See "From the Editor," page 6.) Then, at some point when the pot is nicely boiling, the IRA will denounce British intransigence, withdraw from the talks, and begin bombing and shooting again.

Is there a more optimistic scenario? Certainly. Suppose that negotiations produce a "deal" involving joint authority by Dublin and London over Northern Ireland. That is unlikely but just possible.

Does anyone imagine, however, that Protestants would simply acquiesce? Loyalist terrorists have the distinction of having committed more murders in the last three years than the IRA. And one may reasonably suppose that, in murder as in other things, practice makes perfect. In these circumstances, they would conclude that since the British Government was now their enemy, and the unionist political leaders its dupes or worse, they would have to fend for themselves. Loyalist attacks on the Catholic nationalist community (by this time under firm IRA control), on the politicians and civil servants from London and Dublin who administer joint authority, on the British Army, and on innocent bystanders would grow in numbers and seriousness. As the conflict worsened, the IRA would re-enter it.

Under fire from two sides, the British might soldier on, or they might not. If they did, the ultimate result of the negotiations now eagerly awaited would be more terrorist murders and more repression in defense of constitutional structures that would have less popular support and legitimacy than the present ones.

But if the British scuttled, leaving the locals to fight it out, as they did in India, Pakistan, and Aden, the result would be a Bosnia-style civil war of ethnic cleansing, for which indeed the IRA is already preparing. Such a conflict would most likely end with Ireland divided between a Catholic South of 28 counties instead of the present 26, and a Protestant North of 4 counties rather than 6, with Belfast reduced to a Beirut. Not a great deal to show for thousands of deaths. And even if the North were to be wholly subdued in the war and Irish unity proclaimed over the prostrate body of unionism, that would merely usher in a guerrilla war waged by recalcitrant Protestants against Dublin.

Those, mind you, are the results of the optimistic scenario.

These hideous prospects stem from a common error: that of regarding the Ulster Protestants as a temporary obstacle to achieving an historically inevitable Irish unity. Irish-Americans are especially inclined to treat the Protestants as non-persons, misinterpreting the "troubles" as a conflict between Britain and the Northern Catholics. But even detached reporters fall into this way of thinking (or, rather, of not thinking). Here, for instance, are the *Wall Street Journal's* Kyle Pope and Lawrence Ingrassia on the day of the ceasefire: "With Protestants making up 57 per cent of Ulster's population, that [i.e., Irish unity] could be years, if not decades, away."

In fact, demography offers no solution. Even if demographic change were to generate a Catholic majority for a united Ireland, that would merely provide the British with a democratic excuse to depart, which, on present form, they would seize with alacrity. But they would leave behind a million Protestants determined not to live in such an Ireland. They would be at least as indigestible for Dublin as the half-million Catholics have been for London. And that is a problem that can be neither wished away nor bombed away. The brute fact is that there are two Irish nations, and as long as these nations continue to feel nationalist passions as strongly as they plainly do, they cannot be accommodated in a single Irish state.

Solutions that ignore this reality will fail; solutions that reward violence will invite more of it; and solu-

Cuomo at Bay

Dole circles like a condor
  While dropping tidbits to
Pataki, as D'Amato
  Hawks handouts from a loo;
Meanwhile, the limos gather
  For one more college try
As Clinton does to Cuomo
  What Dinkins got. Bye-bye.

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tions that do both will move Ireland yet further toward a murderous chaos with no end in sight.

Blame It on Rio

LEAVE aside for a moment the wisdom of the Pope's spokesman in saying that Vice President Al Gore was disingenuous when he stated that America was not interested in promoting abortion abroad. Clearly this is an Administration that wants to have it both ways on the abortion issue, increasing funding for abortion providers and instructing its State Department to push for abortion rights while denying that it is doing anything of the kind. If it does nothing else, the Vatican spotlight on the International Conference on Regulation and Development to be held in Cairo will force the Administration and its friends in the UN to clarify a draft plan of action calling for billions of dollars to be spent to achieve goals kept deliberately vague.

But the almost exclusive focus on abortion distracts us from the chief problem with Cairo, the same problem we faced with its predecessor, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio: namely, its call for the developed world to tax its own citizens in order to maintain Third World socialism. Although Cairo host Nafis Sadik has learned enough from past mistakes to label this year's festivities an effort to empower women (complete with Jane Fonda as "Goodwill Ambassador"), even the most cursory glance at the 113-page plan of action shows that, like Rio, what Cairo would really empower is governments.

It has proved a reliable shakedown. First, ratify a whole new set of rights, such as the "right" to reproductive or sexual health. Naturally government must protect these rights, so call for billions in public spending. Of course, many Third World governments don't have that kind of cash, so it's going to require billions from the West—at least $25.8 billion over the next two decades. Better still, make sure that the West commits itself to a specific percentage of GNP; 0.7 per cent, to be exact. Then . . .

Put it this way: if you liked Rio, you'll love Cairo.

Fifth Amendment Watch

THE Justice Department's second prosecution of the police officers involved in the Rodney King beating, following their state acquittals, has now been upheld by the appeals court. Although the Fifth Amendment's bar on double jeopardy has never attached to successive prosecutions by different levels of government, this understanding needs to be re-examined in view of the changing nature of federal criminal jurisdiction. At one time, there was relatively little overlap between the criminal laws of the state and federal governments. The states prosecuted a broad range of traditional common-law crimes such as murder, rob-

Clinton Human Rights Policy—A Primer

Why must we invade Haiti?

Because the human-rights situation there is intolerable.

Clear enough. So we must invade Cuba too, right?

No, the human-rights situation in Communist countries is never intolerable. It is just tragic.

I suppose that means the human-rights situation in China is tragic, too?

When big bucks are at stake, as in the Chinese market, the human-rights situation is troubling.

So during his trip in August, Ron Brown publicly told the Chinese that their human-rights situation was "troubling"?

Of course not. He used "private diplomacy."

When Reagan used "quiet diplomacy," all the Democrats attacked him. What's the difference?

The difference is that Reagan was obsessed with Communism and indifferent to human rights.

Oh. But Reagan forced Baby Doc Duvalier out of Haiti in the 1980s, when Ron Brown was the paid flack for Duvalier in Washington. Wasn't Ron Brown indifferent to human rights? Isn't sending him to Peking a clear signal of indifference to human rights in China?

No no no. Ron Brown was defending Duvalier *for money*, and that was the decade of greed. Ron Brown had as much right to cash in as Ira Magaziner did, or Roger Altman, or Hillary Clinton.

So it was okay for Ron Brown to defend Baby Doc because he was being paid for it. Now it's okay for him to kowtow to the Chinese Communists and disregard everyone fighting for human rights and democracy in China?

The two things are completely different. He defended Duvalier to make money for *himself*. He's kowtowing to the Chinese so that *other* people can make money. That's patriotism!

Can you summarize the policy, then?

Sure. Right-wing regimes are intolerable. Small Communist countries are tragic. Very big Communist countries are markets.

Is this policy consistent?

Yes. Ron Brown takes the same attitude in every single case.

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bery, theft, and assault, while the Federal Government prosecuted a far narrower range of crimes such as treason, piracy, and counterfeiting. Federal jurisdiction was limited to the prosecution of crimes bearing some meaningful impact upon "interstate commerce" or having some other clear constitutional basis, e.g., bankruptcy fraud.

In recent years, however, federal jurisdiction has grown enormously. The "interstate commerce" requirement has been largely read out of the law by the courts, and Congress has come to view all problems, however local, as demanding its attention. Today, there are few significant criminal activities over which concurrent state and federal jurisdiction does not potentially exist. As a result, the potential for second prosecutions exists in a growing range of criminal cases—all falling outside the scope of the Constitution's double-jeopardy protections.

The principal current problem with second prosecutions is that they are arbitrarily undertaken, often at the behest of political interest groups as in the King case; if undertaken on a more regular basis, however, they threaten to undermine further an already-debilitated American federalism. Civil-libertarian groups such as the ACLU endlessly divine new "constitutional rights" having no basis in the history or text of the Constitution; they have been in the cheering gallery, though, as an *express* right has been eroded by Washington's ceaseless extension of its powers.

Notes & Asides

■ Memo to: WFB
From: McF

Bill: Did you see the review in the *Albuquerque Journal* of Christo's book, *Thank You for Smoking*, by Steve Brewer? I'll pass it along, and will quote just one line from it here: "[Christopher] Buckley, son of William F. Buckley and already twice the writer his old man will ever be, previously wrote [*The White House Mess*] . . ."

Dear Jim: Yes, I did see that. Poor Brewer. Or did you hear? He committed suicide. Left a note, something about atoning for a life of misjudgments. Poor guy. Well, at least he got to read Christo's book before popping off. Warmest, Bill

Supplementary memo to: McF
From: WFB

Jim: Just as I wrote you the above, I received a translation program for my computer: English–English, French–English. To practice, I followed instructions to translate from the English to the French, and the computer ground out the following:

"If you must know—it fell off a desk."

De: McF

Bill: Vous faisait voit la révision dans *l'Albuquerque Journal* du livre de Christo *Merci pour Fumage*, par Steve Brasseur? Je passerai il, et citera l'on juste ligne de lui ici: "[Christopher] Buckley, fils de William F. Buckley et déjà deux fois l'écrivain son vieil homme jamais soyez, a écrit précédemment [*Le Désordre de la Maison Blanc*]."

Jim: Oui, j'ai vu ce. Brasseur pauvre. Ou vous faisait entend? Il s'a se suicidé. Gauche une note, quelque chose environ expier pour une vie de [misjudgments]. Type pauvre. Eh bien, au moins il a pu lire le livre de Christo auparavant crever teint. Plus chaud, Bill

I then asked the computer to take the French, as given above, and retranslate it into English. The result is utterly captivating. Hotter, Bill . . .

Of: McF

Bill: Did you make see the revision in the *Albuquerque Newspaper* of delivers of Christo *Thank You for Smoking*, by Steve Brewer? I will pass he, and will mention him one right line of him here: "[Christopher] Buckley, son of William F. Buckley and already two times the writer sound old man is ever, has written previously [*The Disorder of the House White*]."

Jim: Yes, I saw this. Poor brewer. Or did you make hear? He has himself killed. Left a note, something about expiate for a life of [misjudgments]. Poor type. Eh well, to the minus him could read the book of Christo before croak complexion. Hotter, Bill

—WFB

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ON THE SCENE

Central Problem

RICH LOWRY

Roman Genn

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE DAY after the crime bill passed in the House with partial Republican support, the Republican National Committee was staring at a financial debacle. By 10:30 that morning about three hundred irate callers had reached the RNC's finance division to say they weren't going to give any more money to a go-along Republican Party. Estimates of potential lost contributions initially went as high as $1 million.

Those incoming calls could have been orchestrated by anti-gun-control groups. But the RNC's tele-marketing outfit ran into the same anger. RNC callers typically get $150 in pledges an hour. That Monday they pulled only $50. "When we're making several hundred or several thousand calls a day and we're hearing it from 25 to 40 per cent of people who are wanting to know, Why, what are y'all going to do [about the crime bill]? then that's really more telling," says RNC Chairman Haley Barbour. "For two or three nights, people were very, very concerned."

They were concerned about what they perceived as a Republican fold. Most GOP insiders say that's unfair to House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich, who performed tactical pirouettes on the crime bill. First, he held together all but 11 Republicans on the initial procedural vote against the bill. Then, instead of letting gun-shy moderates get picked off by Clinton, he sent them en masse into negotiations with the White House, where they won some concessions. Finally, he and the bulk of Republicans voted against the amended bill, preserving "social pork" as a GOP issue.

But Gingrich may have been too clever for the party's good. It wasn't until the crime bill reached the Senate that the GOP grass roots got the message that the party opposed the bill outright. RNC callers were netting $250 an hour while Republicans trashed it in the Senate, and contributions stayed high even after they lost (betrayed by Senators Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, John Danforth of Missouri, and John Chafee of Rhode Island—all of whom had signed Bob Dole's letter demanding votes on a package of amendments, but then voted with the Democrats anyway).

If the crime bill's passage in the House sent chills through Republican operatives, it should prompt a strategic rethinking in the White House. The upshot of the House action was that the Democrats got almost everything they wanted (the $3.3 billion trimmed from the bill probably never would have been spent anyway) while dividing Republicans and demoralizing their grass-roots base, crucial to the turnout that wins mid-term elections. If Clinton can re-create the crime bill's bipartisanship on other issues—and Republican negotiator Michael Castle (Del.) says Clinton confided to him that he'd like to "institutionalize" such bipartisan bartering—he'll have found a formula to revitalize his Presidency and deflate the opposition.

New Democrat types have realized this all along. "Instead of governing as a partisan Democrat always searching for the 218th vote in the House, the President must govern as a New Democrat who reaches across party lines to build a new, broad-based governing coalition," Al From, president of the Democratic Leadership Council, writes in *The New Democrat*. "If he does, he will rescue the Party and take a giant step toward his own re-election."

Clinton has never taken the step. "The strategic flaw," says Will Marshall of the DLC-affiliated Progressive Policy Institute, "has been an over-accommodating stance toward the congressional leadership and the interest groups that stand behind it." Crime is an example. Clinton never introduced his own bill, missing his chance to make a New Democrat proposal (the DLC wanted a bill tightly focused on community policing and prison funding) and acquiescing to legislation festooned with expensive and decidedly Old Democrat irrelevancies.

The near debacle that ensued points Clinton's way to the center. It exposed a White House so weak it can hardly get its next breath, let alone support the Rooseveltian ambitions of the First Lady. And it killed health-care reform, at least in its most grandiose and politically noxious forms. When Congress returns this month, the President will be forced to go bipartisan on health, and two months after that he is likely to be confronted with Republican gains in the House that will make the 218-vote, Democrats-only strategy a relic.

The target of any shift toward the center will be Republican moderates like Representative Chris Shays (Conn.), one of 46 House Republicans who voted for the crime bill. "The problem was that Republicans had a difficult time claiming pork had been added to the conference report," he explains, "because no so-called pork, or, as I refer to it, preventative programs, had been added. And then I get into a big debate with some who describe as pork what I would describe as very necessary spending. So I think Republicans looked pretty silly." The GOP, in short, acted in bad faith: "Republicans

Mr. Lowry is NR*'s national political reporter.*

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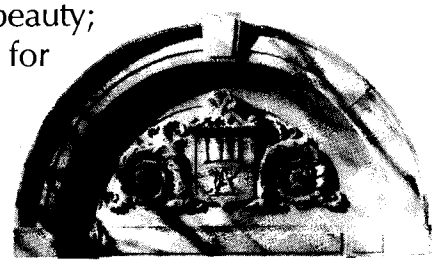

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A Commitment to Intellect

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who believe in this bill said, 'We're not sure we like it because we don't want to give President Clinton a victory.'"

Shays is the kind of Republican the White House can handle, and there's a bloc of about forty like him in the House. In a sense, they have one of their own in the White House: Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, who did Clinton's dealing on the crime bill, was a liberal Republican when he worked in the Nixon Administration. Tony Coelho, the new de facto chairman of the Democratic National Committee, isn't exactly a bold New Democrat, but he too has the sense to reach out to the GOP rump. Part of the Panetta–Coelho strategy, according to *Newsweek*, will be "more regular attempts to entrap Republicans in acts of cooperation."

"They're going to try to co-opt our moderates," says one House Republican leadership aide. "All we can do is try to keep them united, try to keep them inside the tent. And that's no easy feat because they're not like us. They don't operate from a conservative sense of ideological convictions. They largely think that the government is pretty good about the size it is, maybe could be a little bigger—they'd like in their committees to be beefing up some of their programs. They think the difference between Republicans and Democrats is they'd spend the money smarter than the Democrats."

The likeliest testing ground for a New Democrat appeal is welfare reform. It's "the initiative that most lends itself to center-out coalition building," says the PPI's Will Marshall.

Indeed, Republicans almost started at the center themselves on welfare. The House Republican leadership introduced a bill last year that would not have reduced welfare spending (the only savings came from cutting off benefits to illegal aliens), had fuzzy and complex work requirements, and would have allowed, even encouraged, states to opt out of an AFDC cutoff for young single mothers. The Administration couldn't have asked for a softer GOP alternative. "In reading your proposal to overhaul the welfare system, we are struck by the common ground between it and the House Republican bill," GOP moderate Nancy Johnson (Conn.) wrote Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala on July 14. "We are optimistic that there is sufficient common ground to fashion a strong, bipartisan bill."

This stirred a near revolt on the Right. Representatives from 16 conservative grass-roots groups sent a letter to Gingrich threatening to withhold their support for the proposal unless it was toughened. Meanwhile, the House leadership had Jim Talent (Mo.) and Tim Hutchinson (Ark.), whose Heritage Foundation–inspired bill is bolder than the leadership's, sit down with moderates Johnson, Castle, and Dave Camp (Mich.) to hammer out a compromise. They have done so (although Nancy Johnson is still unhappy), and an improved bill, with more emphasis on the discouraging of illegitimacy, stricter work requirements, and an enforceable cap on welfare spending, will be part of a Republican 10-point reform package to be announced on the Capitol steps on September 27.

So on welfare at least, Republicans won't be such easy marks. The best protection against moves to the center by Clinton on other issues will be maintaining similiarly distinct positions. (The September 27 package is shaping up to be at least a first step, with proposals for term limits, all manner of tax relief—including a $500-per-child tax credit—and a prohibition on U.S. troops serving under UN command.) Then, Republicans can dare Clinton to come all the way to them and hope his Left keeps him tied down.

Otherwise, Bill Clinton will be on the way to his next comeback. "If Clinton had started off his Presidency by having a better dialogue with Republicans, [and] I'm not saying caving in to them," says Rick Lazio (R., N.Y.), who helped cut the crime-bill deal, "that would have been Republicans' worst nightmare." Still is. □

Blinder Faith

LAWRENCE KUDLOW

Fred Carlson

WASHINGTON, D.C.

IVY LEAGUE debutants usually come out in traditional towns like New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, but ex-Princeton economics professor Alan Blinder, recently appointed vice chairman of the Federal Reserve, chose instead to make his maiden speech in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, at a meeting sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. But nobody asked him to dance. In front of many of the world's leading central bankers, business people, and economists, Blinder argued that interest-rate policies should be aimed at reducing unemployment rather than simply targeting price stability. In so doing, Blinder contradicted the views of his boss, Alan Greenspan, and offended Bundesbank head Hans Tietmeyer, both of whom were present.

As a devout Keynesian, Blinder has always favored a demand-management approach to economic policy. In numerous magazine columns and books, he describes himself as an "inflation dove" with boundless confidence in the efficacy of government; he believes that the U.S. public sector is "emaciated" and the country "undertaxed." During his confirmation hearings for the number-two job at the Fed, Blinder told Congress: "The older I get, the less respect I have for the signals emitted by our vaunted speculative markets."

Reminiscent of the Carter era, Blinder's policy prescription would have the Fed pour money into the economy to keep interest rates low and stimulate demand by consumers and businesses. This demand stimulus, in turn, is expected to create jobs and lower the unemployment rate. Bolstered by government taxing and spending, money manipulation by the Fed is supposed to give the government a near-complete

Mr. Kudlow is NR*'s economics editor.*

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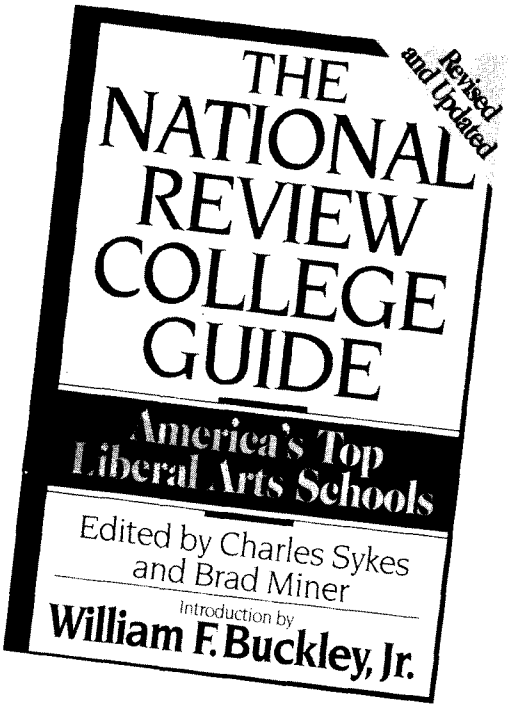

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ability to drive the economy by stepping on the gas during recessions or putting on the brakes should the economy overheat into inflation.

Demand-siders like Alan Blinder have never understood the crucial role of supply. People work, save, and invest only if after-tax returns are sufficient, payable in dollars that have real value. Higher tax rates on high-risk investment, personal income, or business payrolls blunt incentives and cause individuals to withhold their supply of capital and labor from the market. Risk-taking, entrepreneurship, good management practices, and plain old hard work are all discouraged by frequent government intervention. Cheap money de-linked from gold or other real assets produced by the economy also causes people to withhold their supplies of capital and labor, since shrinking dollars further reduce the reward for work and risk-taking.

When both inflation *and* unemployment rose during the late Seventies, the Keynesian demand model imploded. Rather than stimulating demand, easy money drove inflation and interest rates sky high. Rather than holding down inflation, rising taxes weakened incentives and depressed the economy. Smart money and smart people boycotted the U.S. economy because it no longer paid to work and invest. Output and employment fell, while prices and interest rates rose.

Statistically, the demise of Keynesian demand-management policies is easy to chart. As the dollar was unhinged from gold, and as federal taxes and spending steadily moved up, aided respectively by inflation-driven bracket creep and by Great Society entitlements, the U.S. economy entered the stagflation period producing 7.2 per cent average annual inflation and 2.1 per cent real growth from 1968 to 1982. The average unemployment rate was 6.4 per cent. During the end of this period, from 1978 through 1982, industrial production declined 3.2 per cent, while the consumer price index rose 48 per cent. By late 1982, unemployment had risen to 11 per cent.

Contrast this with the early 1960s and most of the 1980s, when the dollar was more closely linked to gold and tax rates were brought down. From 1961 to 1967 real GDP growth averaged 4.9 per cent, yearly inflation 2.4 per cent, and unemployment 4.4 per cent. From 1982 through 1988, as President Reagan ushered in a return to hard money and free-market risk-taking incentives, including across-the-board deregulation and tax cuts, real GDP increased by 3.9 per cent a year, and inflation averaged 3.6 per cent; by the end of the period unemployment had fallen to 5.4 per cent. Under Kennedy and Reagan, the classical economic model of sound money and free enterprise produced strong growth with low inflation and unemployment. There was no Phillips Curve trade-off between inflation and unemployment. Under Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter, the Keynesian model produced low growth with high inflation and unemployment. *In all three periods, unemployment and inflation moved up and down together.*

Have Blinder and his fellow Keynesians learned anything from the historical evidence? Says Arthur Laffer, one of the principal architects of President Reagan's successful growth policies: "There is no set of evidence that will ever shake their faith in the demand-side Keynesian theory of the Phillips Curve."

IF THIS were merely an academic discussion, it would have little consequence. But Blinder is being touted by many as the next Federal Reserve chairman, and even now he is in a position as vice chairman to tilt the center of monetary gravity away from the relatively hard-money policies that have prevailed until recently.

Blinder's monetary liberalism has strong support in Congress. This year Democratic Senators Donald Riegle (Mich.), Paul Sarbanes (Md.), and Jim Sasser (Tenn.)—all members of the Banking Committee—have routinely trashed the Fed's belated interest-rate moves to restrain inflation. "The Fed has launched another salvo of friendly fire upon the economic recovery, despite overwhelming evidence that inflation is no threat," said Budget Committee Chairman Sasser after the Fed's latest rate hike.

At the Jackson Hole conference, however, the presidents and research directors of the 12 regional Reserve Banks were furious at Blinder's remarks, since they have spent years trying to focus Fed policy exclusively on the goal of price stability and away from economic fine-tuning. Indeed, virtually all participants agreed that chronic unemployment, especially in Europe, is a supply-side problem of excessive social-insurance spending and rigid labor laws. With high benefits and high payroll taxes to finance them, work incentives have disappeared, and a reserve army of the unemployed has emerged. Fortunately, the U.S. has not yet gone as far down this road as Europe. In any case, central banks have no role to play in resolving this structural problem.

Yet Fed Chairman Greenspan is still sending mixed signals on the central bank's policy targets. The interest-rate increase in August was accompanied by a statement that the measures "were taken against the backdrop of evidence of continuing strength in the economic expansion and high levels of capacity utilization." In other words, too much growth might cause inflation. Economic policy wonk Jude Wanniski, who has worked hard to gain support for a gold price target, disapprovingly noted that "Greenspan has not lifted a finger to alert markets that the Phillips Curve is not an operative theory."

Greenspan occasionally pays lip service to the use of gold as an early-warning inflation indicator, but he never follows through. Blinder abhors the use of gold or commodities, or for that matter any price signals from global auction markets. This is too bad, since both market prices and government reports are showing an inflation upturn. The widely followed *Journal of Commerce* industrial commodity index, for example, has just hit a new high, rising at a 25 per cent annual rate this year. Gold is holding around $390, and the dollar remains low in terms of the perennially hard Japanese yen and German mark.

These trends spell trouble for the economy, which is just beginning to suffer from the effects of easy money and higher taxes. The former will drive inflation higher, while the latter will depress growth. Blinder's Keynesian demand obsession will prevent him from understanding how prices and unemployment can rise simultaneously.

The solution can only be found on the supply side, where a dollar as good as gold could roll back inflation and interest rates, while permanent tax cuts on capital and labor (that is, capital-gains-tax and payroll-tax relief) would bring down unemployment. But having blinded himself to the past, the Fed's new man may be even blinder in the future. □

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There's a Kind of Hush

DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

SAN FRANCISCO

AH, San Francisco. Fog rolling through the Golden Gate. Cable cars. Sourdough bread. Painted Victorian houses standing proudly in a row. Thought police.

In this city known for its tolerance, there are limits. Consider the city's treatment of KFRC-FM, an oldies station with the slogan, "Less talk, more yelling." Taking a break from their usual laxative jokes one March morning, disc jockeys Gary Bryan and J. Paul Emerson called homosexuals "sad and stupid and pathetic." By April, the county Board of Supervisors' two lesbian members, Susan Leal and Carole Migden, had sicked the San Francisco Human Rights Commission on KFRC. After an "emergency" vote, the commission's director, Edwin Lee, informed Miss Migden and Miss Leal that his staff would "research . . . what possible steps may be taken" to challenge the station's FCC license. (Following a press contact, Miss Migden decided to "pull back" her request because of the appearance of "intimidation.") Mr. Lee also said the commission would meet with station management, apparently for re-education.

It would be wrong—not to mention illiberal—to go after people simply because you disagree with what they're saying, and San Francisco's censors know that. So they have come up with a public-safety rationale. Miss Leal told the *Bay Area Reporter*, "Broadcasting inflammatory and ignorant statements can lead to further discrimination and possibly acts of violence."

Hence the need for re-education, kindly administered by the Human Rights Commission, whose ostensible role in the KFRC flap was "to mediate and resolve complaints." In May the station issued an apology to the gay community, not only for tasteless anti-gay remarks, but also for "not promptly responding" to complaints. The following week, after meeting with the commission, KFRC also apologized for jokes about ways to reduce the Chinese population.

You might wonder why county supervisors would try to throw the weight of San Francisco's government upon a radio station because of two disc jockeys' foolish opinions. But in San Francisco, what you say is more important than what you do, as Catholic Charities recently discovered. In June the San Francisco Health Commission moved to cancel an annual $1.5-million contract for Catholic Charities' Peter Claver House, a home for destitute AIDS patients, because of its "lack of compliance" with a commission policy that requires the sexual orientation of AIDS service providers to be "representative of the target population served." Only after the reluctant charity agreed to stipulate that some of its board members are homosexuals was the contract renewed.

In what could be construed as an attack on the Church's position on homosexuality, Catholic Charities also had to stipulate that the archbishop is willing to appoint openly gay people to its board. "This is not about who you sleep with," Health Commissioner Arthur Jackson explained. "It's about being understanding and sympathetic to your target population." Apparently, the fact that Catholic Charities paid to convert a fleabag hotel and later donated a building to care for indigent AIDS patients did not constitute proof that the organization is "sympathetic."

At this point you may be wondering just who serves on the board of the Human Rights Commission. Devout Christians need not apply. Last year, the Reverend Eugene Lumpkin, pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, was kicked off the commission after being dogged by a three-month controversy. Lumpkin supported civil rights for homosexuals, his commission votes toed the PC line, and he ministered to people with AIDS. His crime was believing in a literal interpretation of the Bible. Asked whether he believed in Biblical passages that decree death by stoning for homosexuals, Lumpkin replied, "That's what the book said." Radical gay activists cried that such statements encourage violence against homosexuals—as if Lumpkin's comment might have led Baptists to throw boulders in the Castro. Saying Lumpkin was guilty of "advocating violence," Mayor Frank Jordan asked him to resign. When Lumpkin refused, Jordan gave him the boot.

Sometimes the Federal Government plays a role in Bay Area censorship. In November, Housing Rights, Inc., of Berkeley filed a complaint with HUD against three Berkeley residents—Alexandra White, Joseph Derringer, and Richard Graham—because they had protested against a shelter for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics that was proposed for their neighborhood. The project is going forward, but Housing Rights, Inc., Director Marianne Lawless filed the complaint anyway because she believed the Berkeley 3 "intimidated, interfered [with], or coerced" her group by unsuccessfully challenging the shelter. She argued that resistance to the project amounted to discrimination against the disabled, in violation of the 1988 Fair Housing Act.

The Berkeley 3 didn't discriminate against anyone. They spoke out against a government project, as citizens have a right to do. Yet HUD spent nine months investigating the 3, each of whom faced a possible fine of $50,000. It searched for letters they had written and met with their lawyer. Like the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, HUD held mediation sessions. The 3 said HUD indicated it was willing to end the investigation if they agreed to end their protesting. Thus HUD's investigation had all the markings of a corporate SLAPP (strategic lawsuit against public participation), except that companies don't have the power to punish enjoyed by the U.S. Government.

Only after much negative press did HUD clear the Berkeley 3. Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Roberta Achtenberg, a former San Francisco supervisor, told reporters there was "no reasonable cause" in the case. HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros echoed the agency's mantra: "HUD is legally bound to conduct that inquiry." Yet HUD could have concluded in a day that the Berkeley 3 were exercising their legal right to dissent.

Before the case was dropped, HUD spokesman John Phillips told a *Chronicle* reporter there was a difference between asking questions about a project and "advocating that housing not be provided to somebody because of attributes they have." Thus Mr.

Miss Saunders writes a syndicated column for the San Francisco Chronicle.

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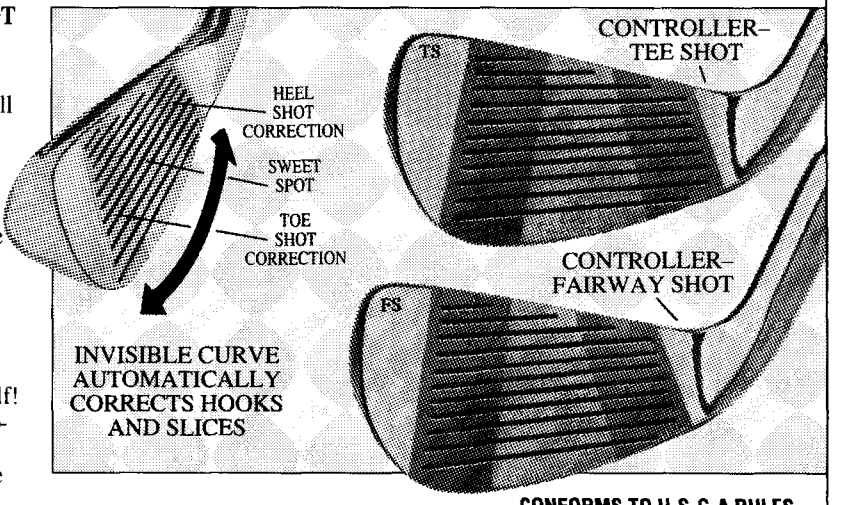

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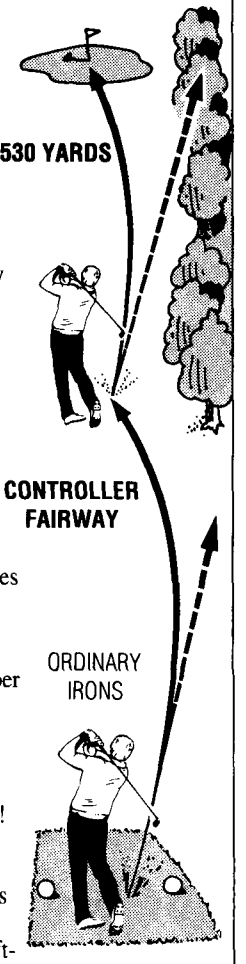

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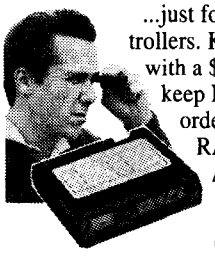

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Phillips argued that taking certain positions should be illegal. As Miss Achtenberg later wrote in the *Washington Post*, "Congress has said . . . the First Amendment does not protect all forms of speech when it comes to housing discrimination." She added: "We can anticipate more cases of this kind."

You can bet on it. □

The Other Castro Problem

MATTHEW CAROLAN

NEW YORK CITY

ACCORDING to recent polls, New York's Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is on his way to a rout of his Republican challenger, sofa-bed millionaire Bernadette Castro. Miss Castro, a regular contributor to the Republican Party, is best known for her company's catchy commercials and her frequent appearances as a target of abuse on Don Imus's irreverent radio show. She is trailing Moynihan by 45 points.

But Miss Castro is counting on the senator's having "mile wide but inch deep numbers," and on the effect of the Rev. Al Sharpton's challenging the senator from the Left. When Rev. Sharpton suggested he might throw his support to Miss Castro, she welcomed a meeting. She is presently canvassing the state to secure the $4 to $5 million needed for five solid weeks of television spots. Support has been light. Miss Castro estimates she will spend $1.2 million of her own money on the campaign.

Before she can start the media blitz, however, Miss Castro faces a primary for the Conservative Party's nomination, practically a prerequisite for a serious Republican campaign in New York. She is up against Manhattan businessman Henry Hewes, a registered Republican who is also running on the Right-to-Life line. Mr. Hewes was defeated overwhelmingly by Miss Castro at the Republican convention in May, which was dominated by Senator Al D'Amato's forces, and he could not afford an expensive GOP primary challenge. But he out-polled her at the Conservative convention in June, and now, as the party's designated candidate, he faces her in a primary on September 13.

Mr. Hewes gained praise when he ran for mayor of New York City in 1989 as the Right-to-Life candidate. In that race, he chastised both Rudolph Giuliani and David Dinkins for failing to address the issues and resorting to ad hominem attacks. He also displayed an acerbic wit concerning their anemic debates. "I'm glad both these guys have agreed not to be corrupt," he said. "I think that's a wonderful step forward."

Miss Castro, who describes herself as "pro-choice but not pro-abortion" (she favors Medicaid funding of abortion and opposes a parental-consent requirement), dismisses Mr. Hewes's victory over her at the Conservative convention as owing to a "backlash" by party leaders angry because the pro-choice George Pataki—Senator D'Amato's hand-picked candidate—beat Conservative favorite Herb London for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Describing herself as a "sacrificial lamb" at the Conservative convention, Miss Castro still believes she will win the primary "2 to 1," despite the anger of pro-life Conservatives (at Pataki, of course). But she says the cost of winning will take away from her campaign against Senator Moynihan.

Perhaps indicating her frustration, Miss Castro called Mr. Hewes "nuts" at a press conference last month. After trying for three days to reach her, I called her campaign about this remark. She called me from her limousine within ten minutes. She said her choice of words was "inappropriate," adding that she really meant that Henry Hewes is trying to be a "spoiler." She dismisses him as a one-issue candidate, fixated on abortion.

Yet a high-ranking Republican staffer in the State Senate, speaking on the condition of anonymity, had this to say about Mr. Hewes's performance in the mayoral debates: "I expected Johnny One Note, but I was blown away by Hewes's knowledge of a number of issues. He talked about school choice, he talked about crime, he just ran the gamut. This was a man you could not lambaste or stigmatize as being obsessed with one issue." Indeed, Mr. Hewes speaks confidently and knowledgeably on a wide range of issues, including tax policy, entitlements, health care, even Middle Eastern politics.

A tendency for ad hominems may be a mistake for a candidate trying to overcome a 45-point gap. But an even greater weakness is Miss Castro's lack of knowledge on important issues. In Buffalo, N.Y. recently, Miss Castro decried the exemptions from federal laws that congressman enjoy. Pressed for specifics, she asked a volunteer to make a note of the question. "That's something we need to take a look at," she said. Similarly, when I asked about the call for tax cuts in her campaign literature, she offered no specifics.

Asked if she favors the Freedom of Choice Act, she explained that abortion is a "moral issue" and should not be a legal one. When I asked whether she would codify *Roe* v. *Wade* or *Casey*, she responded, "I'm not going to answer that, because I'd want to be sure I understand every little facet of both of those cases." Follow-up questions reveal there are some big facets she does not understand, including the fact that *Casey* reaffirmed *Roe* v. *Wade*. (She says of *Casey*, "That's giving the rights back to the states, is it not?" Not precisely.)

She favors the federal "assault weapon" ban, which she seems to think covers "military weapon[s]" like the AK-47 (it doesn't). She says she agrees with the crime-bill provisions backed by Susan Molinari (R., N.Y.), but when I pressed her on Miss Molinari's successful effort to make mere accusations of past sexual assaults admissible in court, she said she hadn't "read the fine print."

In local Republican politics, the State Senate staffer told me, "the first question isn't, 'Do you have principles, do you have philosophy, do you have political sagacity?' It's, 'How much money do you have?' . . . Castro is a country-club Republican, a lightweight." The staffer also suggested that a defeat of Castro in the Conservative primary would be a good opportunity to take a slap at the pragmatic "D'Amato Republicans."

Kings County Conservative Party Chairman Jerry Kassar puts the same point differently: "Hewes doesn't have any ability to raise money, or any real

Mr. Carolan is NR's executive editor.

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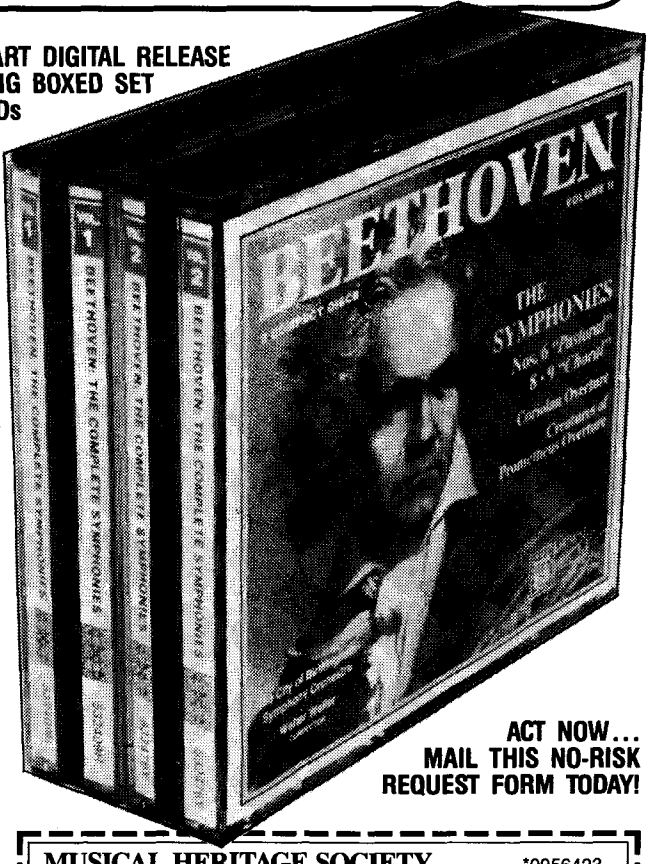

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mechanism behind him. Making Senator Moynihan's life difficult, with the hopeful result of defeating him, I consider a higher priority to the conservative movement than Castro's position on a single issue." Given Mr. Moynihan's 45-point lead and Miss Castro's political ineptness, that remark is hopeful indeed.

Come September 13, New York Conservatives may find they have a different set of priorities. □

Peppery Provocation

RAMESH PONNURU

PHILADELPHIA

"THAT place is an armed camp," declares my cabdriver as we leave Temple University. "You can't blame them, though. The homeless people around here are pretty rough. Very aggressive."

By the end of his third year at Temple's law school, Lincoln Herbert had been mugged three times. On May 3 he was walking back to the law school after a late dinner to resume studying for his final exams when, he says, a disheveled stranger demanded money from him. "I said, 'Go away, leave me alone,'" he recalls. "He said, 'Make me.' And he said that he had a knife." Mr. Herbert sprayed the man with pepper gas and ran into the law building. The stranger followed him in, shouting threats, so Mr. Herbert sprayed him again. A few university employees who were attracted by the noise inhaled some of the pepper gas, and one of them, an asthmatic, went to the hospital the next day.

Two days later, dubbing Mr. Herbert "a clear and present danger to the safety of individuals in the Law School community," Dean Robert Reinstein suspended him and said he would seek to expel him permanently. He claimed that Mr. Herbert had "committed an act of violence which harmed several of our employees and a stranger in violation of the school's conduct code." Mr. Herbert maintains that the dean seized upon the incident as an excuse to get rid of a troublesome conservative activist. Mr. Reinstein claims that Mr. Herbert "attacked without provocation both outside and inside the law school" and denies the charge of political bias.

But it's easy to understand how Mr. Herbert—whose political activities have taken up so much of his time that he had to extend his studies by an extra year—could get on the dean's nerves. Mr. Herbert founded Temple's chapter of the Federalist Society and has written for the law school's newsletter a column called "Notes from the First World." After being voted out as president of the Federalist Society last year, he organized the Western Heritage Society.

"The purpose of the organization," he says, "is to open up for public debate all the issues that are important to the survival of our culture. We don't think there should be issues of that magnitude which can only be discussed at the dinner table but not in public." The society has sponsored lectures blasting race-norming, immigration, and *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, putting up argumentative posters around campus to promote the events.

In April Dean Reinstein wrote a note "to the law school community" accusing the Western Heritage Society of having "posted messages of vitriol and hatred in the building. Their apparent purpose is to verbally assault individuals and groups within our community . . . . The members of the Western Heritage Society should not be left in doubt that the practice of expressing hate speech is reprehensible."

Mr. Herbert charges that Dean Reinstein's disciplinary moves are an attempt to decapitate his organization. "We're singled out because we are a serious, articulate, intelligent ideological challenge to the administration and the dean's political agenda," he says.

The walls of the society's tiny office (the smallest on campus, Mr. Herbert complains) display columns by Jeffrey Hart, Pat Buchanan, Samuel Francis, and Joseph Sobran, along with covers from recent issues of *Chronicles* and several anti-immigration tracts. (One explains that "rude and arrogant" Indians are "colonizing New Jersey towns.") A letter recounts Mr. Herbert's outrage at the refusal of a local Kinko's to make copies of an "offensive" poster he had written.

The Western Heritage Society does not appear to worry much about giving offense. One of its posters singles out students by name, describing one as "head dyke." Another refers to Temple Law Students for Lesbian and Gay Rights as "the local Pederast Lobby" and "the Soddomites" (*sic*). A cartoon below the text expresses the society's opposition to the enlistment of gays in the military. The cartoon cannot be reprinted in NATIONAL REVIEW; suffice it to say that it involves plays on the terms "cockpit" and "joystick." Mr. Herbert says of the poster, "Some so-called conservatives were offended by it." Comments Stephen Balch, head of the National Association of Scholars: "He is vocal. He has strong feelings, it's quite clear. He makes no bones about where he stands."

Mr. Herbert has often encountered opposition from Republicans who find him too divisive and whom he finds too liberal. He says two officers of the College Republicans even went to the Intercollegiate Studies Institute to ask it to stop funding the Western Heritage Society. Chris Long, ISI's vice president for programs, would not comment on the matter, but he did say that Mr. Herbert "has been obnoxious and rude to many people on our staff. No doubt his personality is the source of some of his problems at Temple."

Still, Mr. Long agrees that the administration has treated Lincoln Herbert unfairly. He has been excluded from campus without a hearing (he was not even allowed back to take his exams), and his lawyer, George Bochetto, complains that the university has been reluctant to release documents. As of early September, an expulsion hearing had yet to occur; each side blames the other for the delay.

Mr. Herbert views his travails in theological terms. "One doesn't hear the word 'evil' used too much these days," he says, "because somehow we're not supposed to use the word, but I think [the dean's conduct] is. The Bible says that evil often masquerades as good, clothing its arguments in high-minded rhetoric."

Mr. Bochetto views the administration less apocalyptically. "They overreacted," he says, "and now they don't have a graceful way to admit their mistake." Nor does his client seem inclined to give them one. □

Mr. Ponnuru, NR's summer editorial assistant, is a senior at Princeton.

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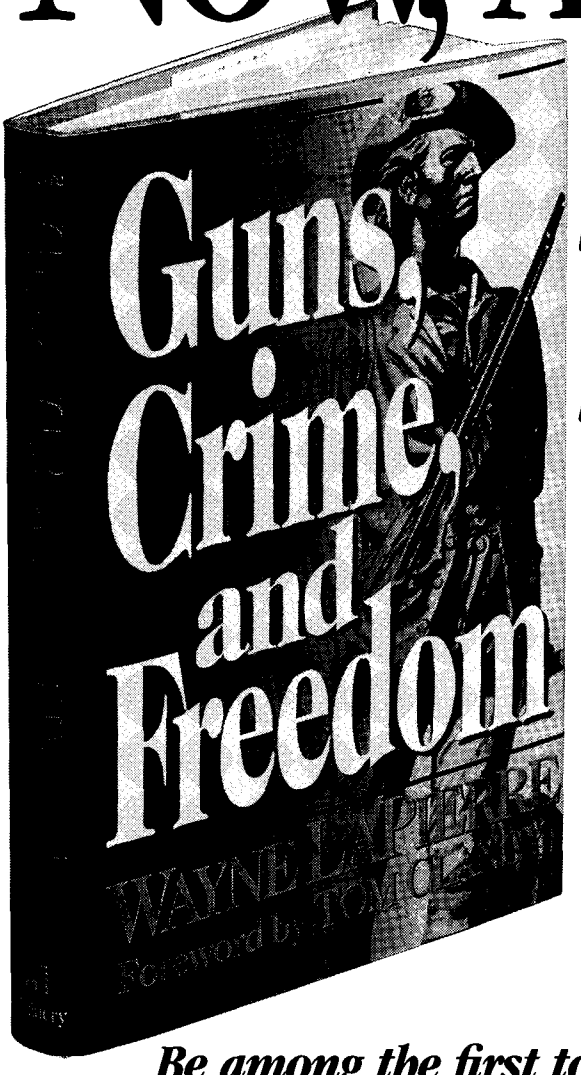

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help

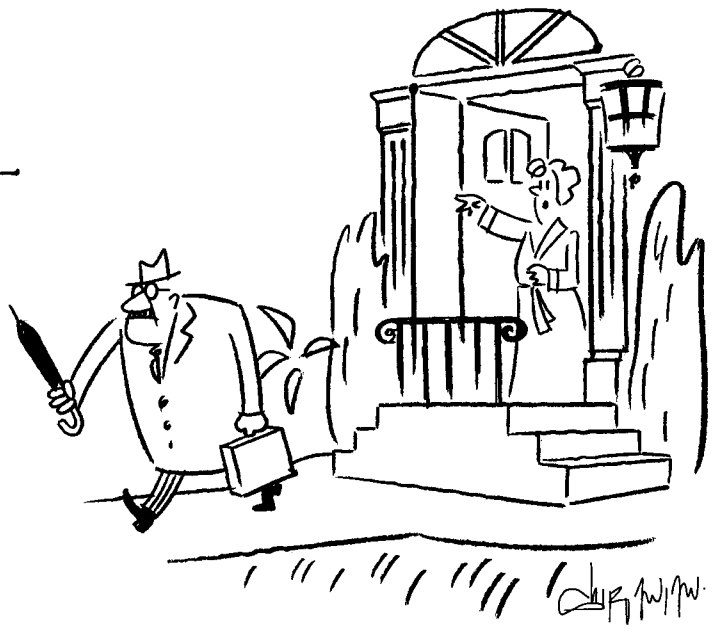
IBM Goes Political

Mr. Watson must have stirred
Deep down where he'd been interred
When a memo went to all
Workers to, for God's sake, call
Senators and congressmen
Lest a health-care regimen
So insane, hair hackles rise,
Hits before they mobilize.

W. H. VON DREELE

"Can she call you back? She's out growing the economy."

"If you can wait, I believe we're going to be drastically reduced."



"Goodbye, dear. Have mercy."

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RANDOM WALK

A CONTROVERSIAL decision by Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen to shorten the maturity on Treasury borrowing now appears to be an expensive flop. Recall that last year the Administration claimed it would save $16 billion—one of the largest deficit-reduction items in its budget package—by issuing more short-term securities to reduce interest costs.

Even at the time, the move was widely criticized by Wall Street economists, money managers, and the Treasury's own Borrowing Advisory Committee as a stupid gamble. The rest of America was madly scrambling to lock in bargain-basement long-term interest rates. Record numbers of homeowners rushed out to refinance their mortgages. "Smart corporate America," says Mickey Levy, chief economist with Nations Bank, "went with long-term debt. Only government went in the other direction." Indeed, Disney even introduced the first 100-year bonds. This led the *Washington Post* to ask: "Who do you think is making the right call? Mickey Mouse or Uncle Sam?"

Eighteen months later, the answer to that question is the mouse. "Clearly this backfired on the Treasury," Levy says. "It was a lousy move that may now end up costing the taxpayer money." Over the past year and a half, both long- and short-term interest rates have risen by 175 basis points. This will raise the federal deficit by roughly $50 billion in 1996 and $80 billion by 1999, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Reducing the average maturity of Treasury notes from 6 to 4½ years will compound the problem, since the Treasury will be refinancing often, at higher rates. The problem here is that there will be interest savings in the short term, but the costs of the policy mistake won't appear for five, ten, or twenty years. It sort of reminds me of the Clinton health-care plan.

■ Word in Democratic circles is that White House aides have been meeting with top congressional people to prepare a major pre-election offensive touting the strength of the "Clinton economy." The Democrats will try to take credit for a reasonably good economic performance since the President took office 19 months ago, although the only real stimulus came from a loose Federal Reserve policy last year, which has temporarily boosted total spending in the economy, and a cheap-dollar policy, which has stimulated export production. Presumably the Democrats will *not* talk about the largest tax increase in history, or rising out-year deficit estimates, or the new taxes needed to finance their schemes for health-care and welfare reform.

In any case, the economy has grown at a 3.3 per cent inflation-adjusted annual rate over the past six quarters, and it has produced 4.3 million new jobs, expanding employment at a 2.4 per cent annual rate. For the entire business-cycle recovery period, now spanning 41 months since early 1991, real GDP has expanded by $468 billion, or 9.7 per cent, which comes to an annual rate of 2.9 per cent; and 5.4 million new jobs have been created during the recovery cycle, a total gain of 5 per cent, or an annual rate of 1.4 per cent.

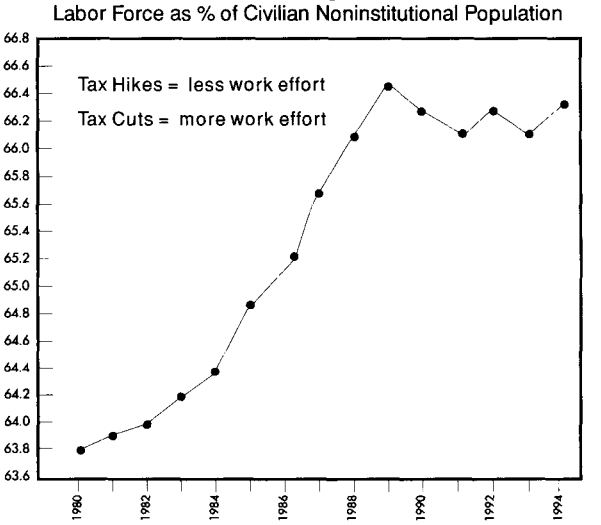
Republican campaigners this fall should make clear that this is very much a sub-par recovery, especially when compared to the economy's performance following President Reagan's across-the-board tax cuts and deregulation. For example, over the first 41 months of that recovery cycle, the real economy expanded by $631 billion, or 16.8 per cent, an annual rate of 4.9 per cent. This is roughly twice the rate of growth of the Bush–Clinton cycle. On jobs, the Reagan cycle was also about twice as strong as the current cycle, adding 10.3 million to non-farm payrolls, for a total gain of 11.8 per cent, or 3.3 per cent annually.

Another key point on jobs is the labor-force-participation rate. Defined as the ratio of the labor force to the total non-institutional population, the measure has barely changed during the present recovery cycle, edging up from 66.2 per cent in March 1991 to only 66.3 per cent through August 1994. By contrast, the labor force participation rate rose from 64.2 per cent in November 1982 to 65.1 per cent in April 1986.

Why did the rate move up in the 1980s but not in the 1990s? Taxes. In recent years payroll and income taxes have gone up, reducing take-home pay for people all across the earnings spectrum. Also, welfare benefits and the earned income tax credit have been raised, thus creating a larger disincentive for those who might start working.

Civilian Participation Rate

Labor Force as % of Civilian Noninstitutional Population



Republicans can rebut Clintonite claims on jobs and the economy—but they will have to compare the Bush–Clinton cycle with the Reagan cycle. And they must offer a contrasting vision to big-government taxing and spending. Failing this, they can look forward to at least two more years of Democratic control of Wahington, D.C.

—GEKKO

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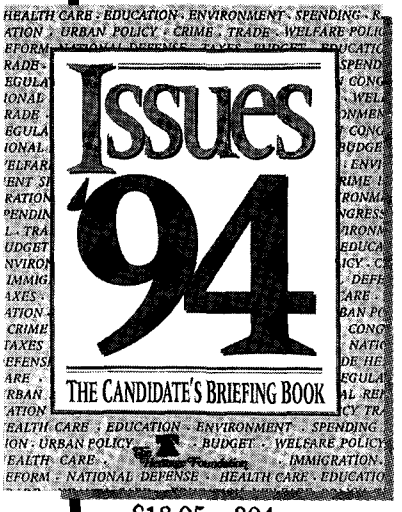

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When Paradigms Collide

THE NEW WAVE

All the signs point to a major political realignment in the United States, with the two major parties either changing radically or being replaced. Is anyone paying attention?

MICHAEL VLAHOS

IT WAS A strange election. For the first time in decades, there was a real third-party presidential challenge, and its candidate got about 20 per cent of the vote. The new President was elected with only a plurality of the popular vote, but his party once again could claim the Presidency and both Houses of Congress. So, in spite of the rancor and uncertainty, the pundits persuaded themselves that the system still worked. *Harper's* even said after the election: " . . . how complete is the calm that succeeds the gale! We claim it a credit to our national system of government."

This was *Harper's Weekly*, the first issue of 1857, just four years before the Civil War. People had no idea of what lay ahead, and certainly no sense that it was so close at hand. American politics today may again be on the edge of upheaval, as happened in 1860, and also in 1828, 1896, and 1932.

How do we estimate the imminence of Big Change in American politics today? We can test the proposition against Sundquist's Sixteen. In 1973 the historian James Sundquist, then at the Brookings Institution, wrote a book called *The Dynamics of the Party System*, which was revised in 1982 to take into account the "Reagan revolution." Sundquist laid out sixteen preconditions that fit all four major realignments in the American party system. What do his preconditions tell us about politics and parties today?

1. A realignment has its origins in the rise of a new political issue or cluster of related issues.

Washington "experts" have been searching for the new issue for a long time. But there are issues and issues. The new issue is not a particular "matter of public concern," as definition 4(b) in *Webster's* has it. Look instead at 4(c): "the essential point; crux: *the real issue*." The real *issue* 4(c) may lurk inside a cluster of "issues" 4(b).

Mr. Vlahos is a Senior Fellow at the Progress & Freedom Foundation.

The first such cluster is grouped around a fear of moral decline. For instance, 65 per cent of Americans told pollsters in 1991 that family values had grown weaker in America in recent years. And polls show that such moral unease stretches over a wide range of social issues, from crime to divorce. Yet 90 per cent say they are satisfied with their own family life; so this is a fear for the future, a fear that a coming apart in the larger society—signaled by out-of-wedlock births, abortion, and teenage lawlessness—will inevitably limit and diminish people's lives and the hopes of their children.

The second cluster expresses the anxiety that a distinctive American identity is disintegrating. Poll questions that illuminate the choice between a unified American national identity and a multicultural vision of America demonstrate an overwhelming popular resistance to the latter and to government policies that seem to promote it. Thus, two-thirds of Americans regularly support a reduction in legal immigration, and there are similar majorities opposed to official bilingualism and ethnic quotas. The voters see government abetting a breakdown in national identity by pushing a multiculturalism that will mean an atomized world of tribes.

The third cluster is about fear and loathing of government. Polls find that 75 per cent of Americans think "the country needs to make major changes in the way the Federal Government works," because it is "incompetent" to solve problems; 73 per cent of all Americans believe the Federal Government creates more problems than it solves, and 63 per cent believe that government is "primarily an adversary" in their lives.

If we put these themes together, we can see a connection between an eroding future, a loss of civic meaning, and a government that not only fails to do what it is supposed to but also invades spheres of life it should leave alone. But people don't hate government as an abstraction—or in isolation. They have not rejected government as laws and institutions; they have rejected the national elite which seems to run the government.

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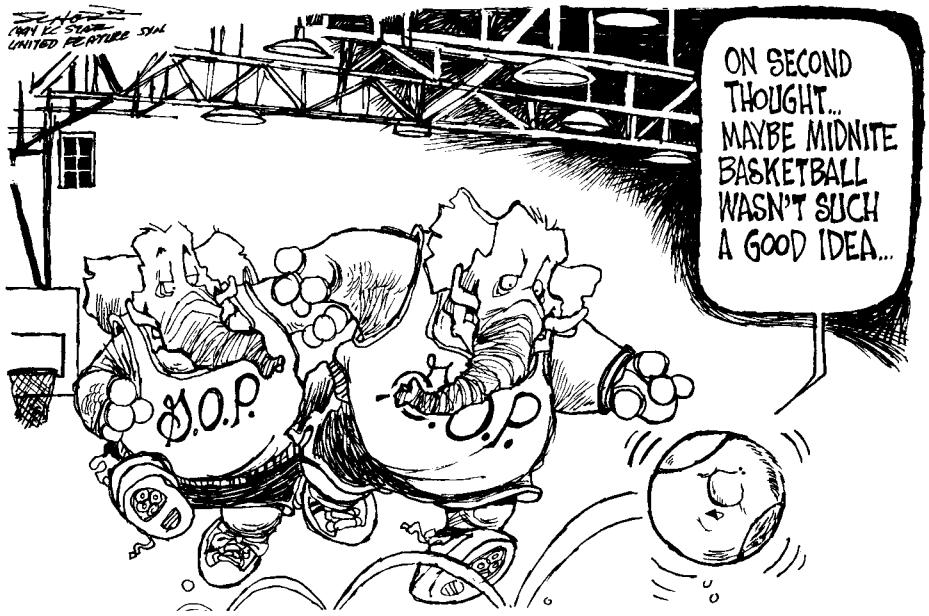
Almost every poll that shows a decline of confidence in government also shows a loss of faith in non-governmental institutions, notably the press, labor unions, universities, and television. Not only Bill Clinton and Dick Gephardt have fallen in public esteem; Bob Woodward and Sam Donaldson have too.

There are significant exceptions to the decline in institutional respect, in particular the military which is astonishingly popular. But the military is the repository of older cultural and patriotic values. It is admired in proportion to its difference from the rest of the political elite, its disaffection from elite culture.

For the problem of a national ruling subculture at odds with the majority is the *real issue* in American politics today. Government has been personalized in the minds of most Americans as a society of yuppies who *own* Washington and its whole national network, from media to academia, from so-called Public Television to its hive of foundation and corporate sponsors. And people resent the elite's condescension expressed daily through the media even more than they resent the elite's power. There is its constant refrain that ordinary Americans are racist, sexist, and homophobic—a mob of malevolent Forrest Gumps—and that other (minority) Americans have to be protected from them by government.



Ross Perot was among the first to see what was happening. When he reminded Americans that "you are the owners," he pulled all their unspoken anger into the light. But people in such circumstances need more than resentment; they need a countervailing vision, one that recognizes the new political issue and uses it to force a realignment of political parties. And, as yet, popular resistance to the elite is still groping for a mature voice.

2. To bring about a realignment, the new issue must be one that cuts across the existing line of party cleavage.

Today's party system was created by FDR, who offered a new vision of an activist benevolent government that appealed to progressives in both parties. America's successful world war legitimated it.

By 1948 the new party system had triumphed, creating a new "mainstream" of respectable political opinion. The new system had a domestic agenda of liberal reform set by an enlightened federal state and an international agenda set by the problem of the Soviet Union. The core vision was that of the Democrats; the Republicans dissented issue by issue and inch by inch. The acceptable Republicans were all traditional fiscal conservatives, with a shrinking number of old "progressives." Reactionary Republicanism—anti-government, anti-internationalist—was put down within the GOP right after World War II. Then the populist New Right was kept out until Reagan. Even Reagan could not break his party out of the mainstream, which took over from within and purged the populists in 1988. Or, as Sundquist put it so well in 1982: "Before [and presumably, after] Reagan, the Republican Party displayed normal political behavior."

So Republicans were, in Pete du Pont's words, "80-percenters"; they wanted less of the same—less regulation, less taxation, less welfare. Less than what the Democrats wanted, that is, which generally meant more than we already had. And that's why the new issue cuts *across* the line of party cleavage. The new issue isn't about gradation; it's a rejection of activist government and of the national elite in both parties.

3. The new issue must be powerful enough to dominate political debate and polarize the community.

The realignment of the 1850s happened when a cluster of issues, including slavery, all came together into an awareness that America was dividing into two conflicting visions. The new vision of abolition, temperance, and nativism brought pietistic and revivalist groups together with other reformers. Civil war was the result.

Today our surface issues are crime, health care, drugs, abortion, gun control, immigration, quotas, welfare—almost every one of them capable of polarizing opinion and dominating debate. In combination, they reflect the fear of Americans that the government and its overclass are responsible for the erosion of their way of

*The polling data and opinion research presented here comes from a large smorgasbord of sources. Many of the polling results have appeared in the American Enterprise magazines *Public Opinion* and *Demographic Report*. Published research includes polls by the Roper Organization, the Gallup Organization, Luntz Research, The Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, Americans Talk Issues Foundation, Louis Harris and Associates, RNC/Voter Consumer Research, National Opinion Research Center, ABC/*New York Times*, NBC/*Wall Street Journal*, and Mellman and Lazarus.

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DEMOCRAT JUDGES AND FAMILY VALUES

BRIAN T. KENNEDY

RETIRING U.S. Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming suggested in a recent interview that the ordinary American—the American who works to support his or her own family and who doesn't belong to any of the special interest groups that feed at the public trough—goes unrepresented today. It would be hard to think of a better illustration than the just-passed crime bill. Despicably misnamed, it went miles to please gun control advocates and welfare bureaucrats and recipients of all stripes. It represented a huge transfer grant from rural and small town America to big cities. But it fell miserably short of taking common sense measures to stop hardened, repeat criminals from preying on law-abiding citizens.

The frustration that results from this sort of lawmaking, year in and year out, does a lot to explain why good Americans increasingly don't vote. The ironic fact that it was House Republicans who saved the crime bill, and with it Clinton's presidency, helps explain why Americans who do still vote are increasingly confused about what the parties represent, and increasingly split their tickets.

But now and then, something happens to remind us of the price of not

(Continues on page West-6)

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WEST WORLD

■ With the addition of former Reagan aide Lyn Nofziger to his all-star California staff, which includes Ed Rollins, Ken Khachigian, Dick Wirthlin and Brian Lungren, Republican U.S. Senate candidate Mike Huffington is the only person in America with more advisors than O. J. Simpson.

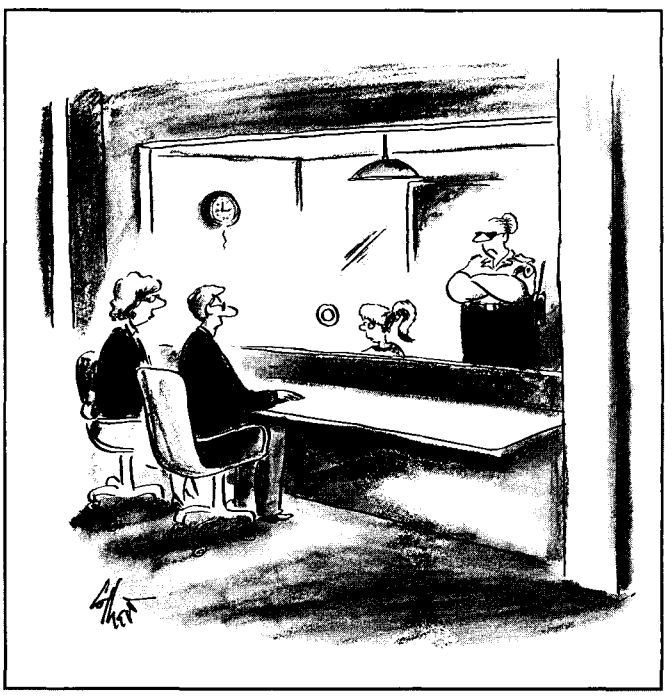
■ In its rush to pass the crime bill, the Senate has thus far overlooked a piece of legislation, already passed by the House, that is a priority for American Indians. Introduced last year by Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye and New Mexico Congressman Bill Richardson, it would legalize the use of peyote in religious ceremonies for those Americans with one-quarter or more Indian blood. Some states, including Texas, already have such a law. This would indeed nationalize it. The possible legal objections are obvious. Indeed, Bill Stites, a non-Native American of the Peyote Way Church of God in Arizona and New Mexico, is already appealing his conviction in Texas for religiously using peyote, saying (we think rightly) that a man's blood should be irrelevant in the eyes of the law. In any case, rumor has it that peyote samples on Capitol Hill disappeared about the time midnight basketball leagues were tacked onto the crime bill conference report.

■ Because of earthquake damage at San Francisco's City Hall, civil court judges are being moved to a temporary, makeshift courthouse for a two-year period. Although none, repeat none, of these judges are disabled, and none, repeat none, of those likely to be appointed are disabled, wheelchair accessibility for judges at this temporary courthouse has become a major dispute. Disabled activists insist that all 29 judicial benches must be fitted with two-foot electric lifts to the tune of $200,000 in tax money or else that all 29 must remain at floor level. They have rejected a compromise whereby four lifts would be built to accommodate the zero, repeat zero, disabled judges. The judges for their part have rejected a compromise whereby they would be raised only 18 inches off the floor, rather than the customary 24, so that cheap ramps rather than electric lifts could be used. The Solomonic solution would be to set the judges on the floor and dig two-foot trenches for lawyers and defendants. The first to be dragged into the trenches should be the so-called activists responsible for this lunacy.

■ Demonstrators clogged Fresno protesting against the possible $300,000 fine and 18-month jail term for a farmer whose tractor accidentally killed an endangered Kangaroo rat. Rumor has it California Senator Dianne Feinstein will call for a five-day waiting period on tractor sales.

■ The Southern California Interfaith Hunger Coalition has published a 60-page booklet boldly entitled, "How to Get Food and Money: A Guide to Welfare, Health, and Other Services in California." A real eye opener, it lists 20 ways for AFDC recipients to avoid requirements to participate in education and job training programs. Among these are to claim marital problems, become dependent on drugs or alcohol, get pregnant, and lack the legal right to work in the U.S.–not all of which are recommended by most faiths. The section on applying for "General Relief" begins: "Be prepared for a long day, but remember that you have a right to apply. You must be helped if you are in the office before it closes. Do not allow anyone to intimidate you unfairly. Remember, if you need help immediately and are very firm in requesting it, you will receive it." Every taxpayer in the U.S. should take a gander at this guidebook to the Great Society. Copies may be ordered at (213) 664-1692.

■ In a direct and unprecedented challenge to the sovereignty of the American people, a high ranking official of the Mexican government has promised to do everything in his power to defeat California's Proposition 187, which would end tax-supported welfare benefits, medical services, and public schooling to illegal aliens. Deputy Foreign Minister Andres



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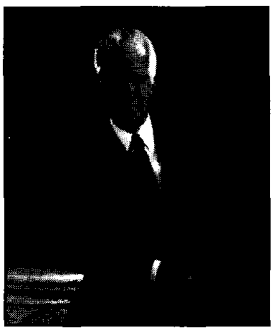

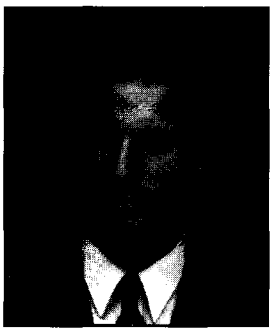

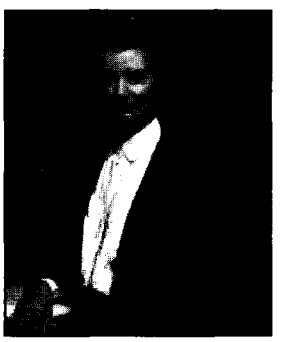

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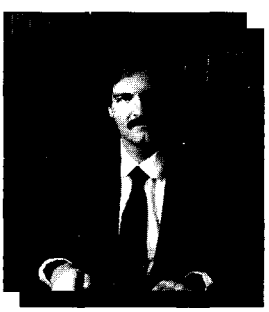

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Recently, an AT&T spokesman told *Advertising Age:*

"Anyone with *that* kind of attitude [concern about supporting the homosexual lifestyle] has to lose it..."

In fact AT&T, MCI and other phone companies have gone beyond this; they actively promote "comprehensive" sex education programs which advocate homosexuality.

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WEST WORLD
(Continued from page West-2)

Rozental warned of "the climate of hostility and violent confrontation that may be unleashed" should the restrictions be approved by voters in November. Mexico, of course, has always encouraged illegal immigration to the U.S. as a convenient pressure release valve for social and economic ills that it is either unwilling or unable to solve. It is doubtful, however, that Californians will be intimidated by a threat of a "long hot summer" should the initiative pass. As he also expressed concern for "the image of Mexicans and Mexico, both here [in the U.S.] and at home," the minister would be well-advised to leave Californians to their elections, and turn to helping clean up his own country's fraud-ridden version of same.

■ We hear Dianne Feinstein had a plan to end crime in agricultural areas, but wasn't able to get midnight rodeos into the crime bill.

■ Remember the "Rage" that our liberal illuminati celebrated a couple years ago while Los Angeles burned? Well, apparently some folks are still celebrating. Antoine Eugene Miller was arrested on Friday, August 26, accused of trying to shoot a motorist at point blank range a few blocks from the intersection of Florence and Normandie, where he had risen to fame in the great Rodney King "Rebellion." Miller's earlier glory was captured on a videotape that showed the young civil rights activist opening the door of Reginald Denny's truck just before Denny was dragged out to assist in the celebrations. Miller showed up later on the videotape going through Denny's pockets after local celebrants had reduced Denny to a bloody pulp. Miller had been charged in the Denny case with premeditated attempted murder, but pleaded guilty to felony assault for throwing a metal-encased telephone book through the car window of a mother and her seven month-old baby, opening a gash in the mother's head and showering the baby with glass. His punishment: probation. No Justice No Peace.

■ Racial politics become more dizzying every day. A decade or so ago, in a sensitive response to charges of racism, the city of Tiburon, California, removed from its Main Street a number of black cast-iron lawn jockeys. The black ones were replaced with white ones. Local activists are now insisting that the white statues are racist and that the statues should be black, "to honor African American jockeys who dominated racing in the last century." The *Los Angeles Times* reports the resolution of this crisis in race relations, itself a perfect reflection of the spirit of the times: "the white jockeys remain, and a statue of 'Jocko' will be taken from storage and displayed with a plaque. Legend holds that Jocko was a young slave who froze to death as he held George Washington's horse while the Father of His Country crossed the Delaware to clobber the British." The authenticity of the "legend" is, of course, irrelevant. No doubt within a decade, reflecting another leap forward in race relations, Jocko will be painted white with a plaque indicating the legend that George Washington was an African American.

■ Tickets are going fast for the annual *NR West* Dinner with Dick Cheney on October 7 in Los Angeles. For reservations call the Claremont Institute at (909) 621-6825.

(Continued from page West-1)

voting, and the advisability of voting a straight (needless to say, Republican) ticket. Such a thing is President Clinton's August 5 nomination—based on Senator Barbara Boxer's recommendation—of California Superior Court Judge Judith McConnell to the U.S. District Court in San Diego.

Originally an appointee of Governor Jerry Brown, McConnell is best known for a 1987 case where she granted custody of a 16-year-old boy to his dead father's homosexual partner rather than to his mother.

The story, in brief, is this: Frank and Betty Lou Batey were married in Bellflower, California, in 1969, and had a son named Brian in 1971. They divorced four years later when Frank became openly homosexual. Betty Lou, a strong Christian, took custody of the boy, charged Frank with sexually molesting him in 1976, and was uncooperative about Frank's court-appointed visitation rights thereafter. In 1982, custody of Brian was transferred to Frank. The reason, according to a psychiatrist familiar with the case, was that Betty Lou had "hampered" Frank's ability to have a "normal relationship" with his son. Rather than submit to this ruling, Betty Lou took her son into hiding for two years, living with friends in various states. In 1984, she turned herself in to the FBI. Although felony child-stealing charges against her were dropped, after two years of court battles, during which Brian lived in foster homes, Judge Judith McConnell assigned custody of the child to his father, who was then cohabiting with another homosexual named Craig Corbett. The next year, Frank Batey died of AIDS, and Brian's mother resumed her struggle to obtain custody of her son. But on November 5, 1987, Judge McConnell decided against her again, granting custody instead to Craig Corbett.

In two previous cases, not counting the 1986 Batey case, Judge McConnell had awarded custody of children to homosexual parents. Yet in these cases it could at least be said that, however unnatural their sexual behavior, the custodians were the children's natural parents. In this sense, McConnell one-upped herself in the Batey case, the first in the state of California where custody was granted to an openly homosexual non-parent over the objections of a parent.

Most galling, perhaps, and bordering on the surreal, was McConnell's sermonizing as she delivered the verdict. She told 16-year-old Brian: "You are fortunate to have a person like Craig Corbett, a man who will provide you

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with a stable and wholesome environment." And she took Betty Lou to task: "She has constantly, over the years, interfered with his education, interfered with his therapy. She has used her position as a mother to interfere with his growing up in a normal life."

Clearly, Judge McConnell identifies normality with the value-free relativism of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, a perspective that might charitably be characterized as modern. Her view on the sanctity of motherhood is decidedly *post*-modern.

McConnell has since trivialized her controversial decisions, saying in an interview: "Sexual orientation is just something that sometimes ignites the fire in non-gay parents." But it bears emphasizing that she went out of her way to set a precedent in the Batey case: In cases where a child over 16 wishes not to be in the custody of parents, it is customary for judges to suggest that the child petition for emancipation. Usually the court will grant such petitions. McConnell avoided this procedure in favor of staking out new legal ground.

TWO points should be made in regard to McConnell's nomination to the federal bench. The first concerns the ongoing cynical attempt by Clinton and other liberals to co-opt the "family values" debate begun in America's churches and promoted by conservatives like Dan Quayle and Bill Bennett.

Clinton told a Yale University audience last year: "I think God wants us to sit down and talk to one another and see what values we share and see how we can put them inside the millions and millions of Americans who are living in chaos." How does this jibe with his nomination of Judge McConnell, given her disposition of the Batey case? What kind of values does the President want to shove down our throats?

Last year, Clinton read and praised Yale Law Professor Stephen Carter's *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion*. This book insists that as a practical matter, liberals must show respect for religious faith, given that the majority of Americans are religious: "liberalism, if it is to . . . demonstrate that the 1992 presidential election was no fluke, will have to find a better way to cope than simply saying to religious people, in effect, that they are superstitious primitives for believing that prayer can work." It argues further that liberalism is compatible with religiosity, even political religiosity, as long as religion is stripped of its illiberal (i.e., traditional or pre-New Age) moral trappings. Thus the Christian Coalition is condemned as "sinister." Indeed, it is discussed in a chapter entitled "Religious Fascism." But again, liberals are called on to transform and use, rather than reject and attack, religion.

Clinton can be pretty ham-handed in carrying this out, as when he called on American churchgoers in August to pray for . . . the crime bill! But listen to him at the Mason Temple Church of God in Christ, in Memphis, last November: "Unless we recognize that [crime and drugs and violence are] due to the breakdown of the American family, the community. . . ; unless we see that some of this cannot be undone by government because we have to reach deep inside to the values, the spirit, the soul, and the truth of human nature, none of the other things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go."

In the midst of the Brady Bill debate, Bill Clinton donned a camouflage jacket and went duck hunting. This was to show that although he's a gun-controller, he's a regular Joe who likes to hunt. Afterwards, he assured the media that his shots had missed; his hunting buddies were responsible for the kills. This was to show that although he's a regular Joe who likes to hunt, he wouldn't hurt a flea.

So it goes too with "values." Clinton gives sermons like that above to assure churchgoers that he shares their concerns, then nominates judges like Judith McConnell to reassure his core Democratic constituency that he despises traditional morality.

The second point to be made regarding the McConnell nomination concerns the lasting significance of the judicial appointment power. For all the publicity received by Supreme Court nominations, the less-noticed appointments of inferior federal and state judges probably have greater day-to-day impact on our lives. These are the judges that delay the executions of convicted murderers, order prisons to release violent criminals early because of supposed overcrowding, tell fire departments whom to hire based on race, confiscate farmers' tractors for running over rats, and redraw electoral districts in ways that alter or corrupt the democratic process. And when these things happen nowadays, more often than not, we are still paying for electing Jimmy Carter, Jerry Brown, and other Democrats back in the 1970s.

LIKEWISE, 50-year-old Judith McConnell—assuming the U.S. Senate confirms her nomination—will be making such decisions for 20 years or more, long after we've forgotten the Clinton administration.

In 1992 Clinton was elected by a coalition of liberal Democrats, misguided conservative Democrats, and disgruntled Republicans who aimed, for various reasons, to punish George Bush, by voting for Perot or Clinton, or by not voting at all. One consequence is that Clinton and his Justice Department, and not Bush and his, are making judicial appointments. On the eve of important mid-term elections in the West —especially California, with moderate Republicans like Mike Huffington and Pete Wilson receiving lukewarm support from the conservative core of their party—conservatives should keep in mind Judge Judith McConnell, and the ability of Democrats to quietly use the appointment power to corrupt our judicial0–political system for decades to come. □

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Guns and Civilization

Honestly, the first thing that occurred to me when I turned on C-SPAN and saw Deleware's Senator Biden droning on like an old Soviet apparatchik about the crime bill and "assault weapons" was: Why is he letting his hair go like an old bum? If I was his wife I'd take a knife to it. The second was: this panty-waist Easterner must have never shot a gun in his life.

For one thing, he seems to be under the impression that we won the West and two world wars with a Colt .22. Twenty-two caliber bullets are what we used to shoot people with, he explained. Now we use 9mm, he lamented. The former used to put holes in lungs, he reminisced. The latter blow lungs right out of the body, he griped.

What planet did this guy grow up on? Obviously one where the menfolk become unhinged at the sound of metric measurements.

Actually, you see, the 9mm, while bigger than a .22 caliber, and a good cartridge and probably now the most common worldwide, carries a bullet exactly the same size as the .38 caliber cartridge that police have used since the days of Al Capone and quite a bit smaller than the .44 and .45 caliber cartridges of western lore. And in fact, the relatively small bullets in .22 and .25 caliber cartridges can be very nasty indeed, and have accounted and still account for an awful lot of murders.

But that's getting off the point. And the fact that Senator Biden himself was off the point at the time is no excuse.

■ An acquaintance who owns a ranch in Wyoming tells this story about a nearby town: A few years back, on a snowy winter night, the town council passed an ordinance prohibiting the carrying of loaded firearms into bars. By noon the next day, enough signatures had been collected from angry and insulted citizens for a recall election. By nightfall, the ordinance was revoked, and there has been no noticeable evil fallout.

Wyatt Earp, on the other hand, earned the gratitude of the citizens of Dodge City and Tombstone, not to mention a permanent place in crime-fighting legend, by helping enforce strict carry laws inside the borders of those rough-and-tumble frontier towns.

These are both all-American stories, just as Norman Rockwell and Frederic Remington are both all-American painters. There's a place for both, and a need for both, in our country today. Senator Biden's crime bill, now regrettably America's crime bill, allows for neither.

Obviously, what the crime bill means to my friend's Wyoming town and to the rest of non-metropolitan America is that Washington, D.C. is tightening the squeeze on local and state self-government and clamping down on individual second-amendment rights, purportedly because of the ongoing carnage in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and other big cities.

But what does the crime bill mean to those big cities? Does it enable their cops to crack criminals' heads, Earp-style, without facing suspension and/or firing and/or jail time? No. Does it ensure that convicted criminals will be locked up solid for long periods? No.

I wish I didn't, but I'm beginning to suspect the federal government of something sinister, something worse than stupidity. I'm beginning to think that this crime bill was aimed first and foremost at the law-abiding gun owner, whom the government, as it becomes bigger and more oppressive, is starting to fear.

As for the real criminals, I wonder if the architects and overseers of expanding government see their interest in *not* helping protect us from them. The more we fear the criminals, you see, the more readily we'll acquiesce in the curtailing of our rights.

Maybe the post-NAFTA sucking sound we hear is not jobs going south, but despotism coming north.

■ Stephen Ambrose's recent book on D-Day, based on oral histories from participants, is a marvelous depiction of the symbiotic relationship between citizens and government in a relatively libertarian democracy. The Americans at Normandy had greater individual initiative to match their courage, and proved more effective, than any others on the field that day—contrary to German and even Allied expectations that their lack of regimented discipline would prove their undoing—having been raised under a trustful government that pretty much let them be.

The opposite attitude of government today is striking. Regular citizens are assumed to be incompetent if not downright villainous.

Which reminds me. Senator Biden actually broke cadence and got his dander up at one point in his oration, but over the damndest thing: the fact that it would be easier to find a shelter for his dog than for his daughter—that is, the fact, fast becoming a cliché, that animal shelters outnumber women's shelters across the fruited plains.

Speaking as a woman, call me a romantic, but I count this a blessing. Where I live we call it civilization. We remember that it was carved out of a wilderness—a wilderness, I might add, full of men who really *did* treat women like dogs. Furthermore, we remember that it was carved out with guns, and with laws that supported the good folk and hampered the wicked. And we believe that the same combination is our only hope of maintaining, and in some places recarving it. —Gail Edge

Miss Edge lives in the northern San Joaquin Valley of California.

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Hell Is Forever

"Extinction Is Forever," the bumper stickers tell us, and so we worry about the extinction of certain species. But how many of us are concerned about our eternal destiny beyond the grave? It isn't popular to talk about Hell or Satan in secularized America — why, even many priests and ministers are afraid to mention them. If the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us he doesn't exist, he's been wildly successful.

Of course, the Bible refers to Hell no less than 70 times, with the most vivid warnings coming from the lips of "meek and mild" Jesus.

You don't have to be a brain surgeon to realize that the denial of Hell involves immense social consequences. Any 8th grader can tell you that if there's no Hell, there's no compelling reason to be good if you think you can get away with being bad. Everything's permitted — and if you relish that thought you're unfit to live in a civilized society.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with the Ultimate Questions — evil, justice, mercy, love, death, damnation, hope, and salvation. Among other things, we probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Niebuhr, Eliot, Waugh, Chesterton, Silone, Maritain, Bernanos, Solzhenitsyn, Thomas More, Dorothy Day, Flannery O'Connor, and Pope John Paul II. Not to mention Dante and C.S. Lewis.

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life. Today 37 per cent of Americans still say Ross Perot reflects their views because he offered himself as the apotheosis of reform and national revival. Less than that would be enough to shatter the old party system.

4. The realigning issue must be one on which major political groups take distinct and opposing policy positions that are easily dramatized.

Ross Perot might have met this criterion in 1992 by pitting himself and "the people" against a corrupt two-party establishment. But when he self-destructed, the New Democrats confused the debate by trumpeting their born-again agenda, stealing from Perot and arrogating Reagan's home ground. Since then, the New Democrat consensus has been dismantled by those who rode it to victory. Gays in the military, the muzzling of pro-life speech, attacks on the Catholic Church and

Rome Wasn't Burned in a Day

IN MUCH of Europe and North America, and even in Japan, governments and those who run them have become so unpopular as to verge on illegitimacy. The reason is clear enough: they are taking more or less half of people's incomes, roughly double what they were taking a generation ago, and their cut is increasing, with no end in sight. This bounty feeds an overclass of haughty rulers and their well-connected friends, whose dissolute example corrupts the middle class. It also feeds an underclass of welfare recipients, whose criminality physically threatens the middle class. Finally, the bounty pulls, while government regulation pushes, growing numbers of the middle class itself into dependency.

Throughout the developed world, voters are saying no to the establishment. Because leftist parties are composed largely of employees and beneficiaries of big government, they remain powerful. But—in Canada, in Japan, in France—voters who want defenders against the state are abandoning conservative parties that have become its mainstays.

The principal political development in the world's richest countries during the next several years, then, is likely to be the crash of the welfare state as new conservative forces replace old ones. We may get a hint of how this will happen by observing the one country where it has already begun: Italy.

The elections of March 1994 capped a three-year process that resulted in the disappearance of every party that had been in government since 1945; in the jailing or indictment of some three thousand political and business leaders; in a parliament four-fifths of whose members are new; and in a government led by conservatives who had only recently been on the margins of public life. The reason for all this is not that the Italian people suddenly discovered corruption in high places. Rather, the rise of the new conservative forces allowed Italians to move against people and practices they had long abhorred.

But why did they wait half a century? The Christian Democrats and their allies made the state into a fountain of privileges for themselves and their ever-expanding clientele; access to jobs and promotions, to contracts and credit, to pensions and medical care, depended on connections. At election time, these conservatives said: Vote for us, or get the Communists. Meanwhile, they were giving the Communists a share of patronage and power over the media, the courts, and industry. By the 1980s, the logic of running a state that tried to monopolize economic and social power had long since turned such nominal conservatives into a *nomenklatura* and left average voters hungry for someone to represent them.

The leaders of the new conservative movement were young and unconnected; they organized on a shoestring. Popping up spontaneously everywhere, they represented different aspects of dissatisfaction with the modern state. Italy's New Right comes in three parts: the Northern League, the Southern-based National Alliance, and the upstart party—started as a group of civic clubs—called Forza Italia ("Go, Italy").

Five years ago, the man who is now minister of the interior was arrested for leading a sit-in against a toll plaza on a highway. The group to which he belongs, the Northern League, was born of resentment against a Southern-dominated predatory government. The League's members, who make a point of speaking Northern dialects instead of Italian, complain that while Northerners account for most of the country's production, the state spends disproportionately in the South. In some Southern provinces, 40 per cent of the working-age citizens receive disability pensions. The bureaucracy, which takes taxes and bribes, is mainly Southern. The example of loose-living politicians, along with the success of organized crime, corrupts Northern families.

The League demands local self-government and privatization to defend the North's culture and virtues as much as its pocketbook. The new president of the Chamber of Deputies, a 31-year-old woman named Irene Pivetti, belongs both to the League and to the Society of Saint Pius, an unfashionable group of conservative Catholics. As the years passed and conditions worsened, it became dominant in the North.

Even farther from power, Italy's nationalist Right illustrates the paradoxes of politics. Since 1945, the Italian Social Movement (MSI), a neo-fascist party, had maintained a small contingent in parliament. It included a mixture of admirers and former adherents of Mussolini, fierce anti-Communists, and former monarchists. Being beyond the pale of respectable politics, it was denied a share of the spoils. Hence the paradox: it gradually came to speak for those who felt left out of the system. In the sprawling slums surrounding Rome and other Southern cities, the MSI helped the poor stand up to the authorities and to organized crime.

Just as the old status quo was crumbling, however, the MSI under its shrewd new leader Gianfranco

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Protestant evangelicals, quotas for the Cabinet, pushing condoms on school kids, and banning bad rifles vividly highlight the elitist thrust of the new regime.

Mr. Clinton's reversion has provoked a new-wave Republican vision—but not among the old, country-club party elite. The new wave is coming from people long penned up in the cattle halls. The most visible are evangelical Christians, who represent perhaps as many as 30 to 35 per cent of Americans. But there are whole blocs of voters who are aroused against the elite by particular issues—gun owners, anti-immigration residents of Florida, Texas, and California, the military and their families, and, above all, the more secular-minded Perot voters who were apparently radicalized by the sheer financial irresponsibility of Washington.

Specific discontents are one thing; a unifying theme

Fini changed its name to the National Alliance (AN), went from being neo- to post-fascist, and adopted a right-wing populist-*cum*-nationalist program without losing its anti-establishment image. Its standard-bearer in Rome, a disheveled fellow nicknamed the Sheep, defines himself as everything the slick politicians, bureaucrats, and sophisticates are not.

Consider also Carmelo Porcu, the AN senator from Sassari, Sardinia, whose name means "pig" in Sardinian dialect. Porcu is a humble spastic who won his neighbors' hearts by helping the handicapped. His speeches against the culture of abortion brought tears and helped defeat a local potentate who (remarkably) had not been tainted by corruption. And unlike the Central European countries' successful "post-Communists" who were themselves recent Communist functionaries, few of the AN's delegates were even alive during the Mussolini period; none served in his government.

The growth of illegal immigration by North Africans, as well as by Slavs, who are disproportionately blamed for violent crime, gave resonance to the AN's nationalism and its call for law and order. As the Christian Democrats collapsed, the National Alliance inherited the South because it was felt to be the most *sincere* voice on the people's side in the region.

Political scientists have long said that Italians love cradle-to-grave welfare, that the spoils system holds society together. No one would have predicted that there would be a place in Italian politics for people who preach that social-security pensions are a fraud, who want to flatten and cut taxes, privatize industries, and introduce vouchers for education and health care. Thus people like economist Antonio Martino, now Italy's foreign minister, were lonely voices until the welfare state began to collapse of its own weight. To maintain Italy's pay-as-you-go pension system (similar to U.S. Social Security), payroll taxes are rising toward 50 per cent. To maintain a medical system that even the poor shun for serious health problems, the government raised the price of prescription drugs. Finally, huge bribery scandals convinced voters of the basic libertarian equation between government and theft. So when Silvio Berlusconi franchised the Forza Italia clubs, middle-class folks lined up.

Berlusconi, who owns the country's top soccer team, three television networks, and much more, acted as the catalyst. The Northern League had damned the National Alliance as statists, while the AN had damned the Northerners as secessionists. Berlusconi brokered a deal whereby the League and the AN would stay out of each other's territory and wrapped the package in Reaganesque optimism. The remnants of the old parties, conservatives included, ran, explicitly or not, in alliance with the Communists. The contrast between new and old was clear, and the New Right won big. Berlusconi became prime minister in May and put together a cabinet that seemed designed to carry out the Right's promises.

The shape of the post-Cold-War right can now be discerned in Italy and elsewhere. It combines political decentralization (the Northern League), free market economics (Forza Italia), and traditional moral values, including patriotism (the National Alliance.) There are ideological tensions in this coalition—for instance, between decentralizers and nationalists. But the obverse of the coin is that this combination of programs can probably rally a clear majority of post-socialist voters.

Unfortunately, in addition to these inevitable tensions, the Berlusconi coalition is beset by local difficulties. A ruling by Italy's constitutional court on state pensions, by adding to the country's already swollen deficit, has delayed the government's program of tax cuts. Berlusconi himself suffered a bruising defeat at the hands of the popular anti-corruption magistrates when he issued a decree freeing suspects detained without trial. He was applying the legal principle of *habeas corpus*, and the magistrates have their own leftist axes to grind, but by bringing charges against the Prime Minister's business colleagues and younger brother, they created an atmosphere of scandal and forced him to back down. And these difficulties were aggravated by the struggle between Forza Italia and the League—and Berlusconi and Bossi personally—over who will inherit the Northern conservative vote. As a result, the government has achieved little, disappointed its supporters, and risks looking like the old status quo in an Armani suit.

But whatever the personal future of Silvio Berlusconi or Umberto Bossi, the young professionals newly elected to parliament know that their future is up to the voters, that the overriding fact throughout the developed world is that the modern welfare state has run its course, and that the future lies with some sort of moralist, decentralized, free market populism. As Machiavelli taught, you cannot bribe an entire people with its own money, not even in Italy. —ANGELO CODEVILLA

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another. How can these various groups be forged into a new majority? Here Perot was a precursor. He linked the clusters of surface issues to their undiscovered center when he talked about Americans taking back their government. Pat Buchanan scored President Bush as "King George" in 1992. Now Oliver North has taken the imagery a step further in calling Washington "The Imperial City." He talked at the Virginia Republican convention about leading an army across the Potomac and liberating the American people. The crowd cheered.

Civil War abolitionists were a lot like today's evangelicals. The establishment saw them as extremists and kept them out of the mainstream for decades. But when the new issue emerged, it was the abolitionists who came up with the image that gave the fledgling Republicans authority. They called the Democrats "The Slave Power." This war epithet completely changed the terms of debate. Can "Imperial City" do the same?

5. Whether a new issue becomes dominant depends not only on its intrinsic power but also on the extent to which the older issues underlying the party system have faded over time.

For decades, the two parties agreed on resisting the Soviet threat and providing economic security for Americans through the agency of a large, benevolent federal state. Most people looked hopefully to the Federal Government to keep making things better. In 1960, 75 per cent agreed that "the national government improves conditions in this country." In 1964, 56 per cent of Americans said that government was "using about the right amount of power to meet people's needs," and 31 per cent said the government "should use its powers even more vigorously to promote the well-being of all segments of the people." The state had real authority and the trust of its citizens. So it seemed that the best strategy for Republicans was to get on the big-government bandwagon and hope to win by presenting themselves as the more responsible drivers.

But the Cold War is over, and the idea of government as leader and protector has been crumbling since the mid-1960s. In 1954 only 16 per cent of Americans thought that "big government is the greatest problem we face." In 1965, 35 per cent thought that "big government will be the biggest threat to the country in the future." Today the comparable percentage, depending on the question and the poll, is 70 to 75 per cent.

Politics has been transformed—but not in the way the Beltway expected. With the Cold War gone, Democrats hoped to focus all their energies (and the "peace dividend") on economic security. But health care, supposedly their winning issue, has become a political liability. On the other hand, the GOP's winning issue—no new taxes—swept all before it and placed a tourniquet on government. Until Mr. Bush threw it away.

6. A new issue is likely to have greater inherent appeal to the voters of one of the major parties and thus potentially a more disruptive effect on that party than on the other.

Opposition to Big Government and to the elite sustaining it are textbook GOP issues, but moderates have usually given them lip service. Now that they are on the agenda, how will the GOP jump?

Consider three issues that have strong appeal among rank-and-file Republicans (and voters in general) but are shunned by party leaders. Almost everyone opposes ethnic quotas, which strike at the heart of the American idea. But the country-clubbers always cave in; witness Bush and the Civil Rights Bill. Indeed, even conservatives remain silent on it. Only William Bennett has vigorously opposed quotas since the Bush retreat, and the Heritage Foundation's recent briefing book for candidates did not even list them as an issue. Second, at the very moment when a majority of Americans voice their discontent with state-run medicine, "moderates" like John Chafee advertise their eagerness to work with the Clinton agenda. Third, school choice, strongly favored by 72 per cent of Republican activists, does not excite much interest from "mainstream" party leaders. In the Bush Administration, Education Secretary Lamar Alexander had to be reminded to include it in his package of reforms. It was never pushed aggressively.

These reforms divide the GOP; none of them even troubles Democrats, who, as the party of big government, are unanimously opposed to all three.

7. The normal response of both major parties is to straddle the new crosscutting issue.

A New Democrat is almost the definition of a straddle. For instance, the crime bill is fashioned to appear tough (the death penalty theoretically applied to more crimes) but actually to be tender (increased funding for liberal social programs). New Democrats' tough talk about cutting welfare rolls conceals the tiny percentage of recipients who will actually be denied money.

In 1992 the Republicans similarly misused the issue of "family values," a phrase they were afraid to explain lest they offend gays and single mothers. This gambit backfired, because hostile media painted the Bushies as medieval hate-mongers anyway. Since the country-clubbers, uncomfortable outside the narrow pen of fiscal conservatism, *were* using the issue cynically and had no idea that it could be defended intellectually, they looked sheepish, half-confessed their guilt, and abandoned the argument. Yet polls found that 65 per cent of Americans said family values were getting weaker and 68 per cent said they wanted political candidates to talk about family values. And since the election, the Democrats have embraced family values as their own issue.

As yet, this too is a straddle: the families they value are merely temporary households without benefit of law or clergy. Of course, the GOP could regain the issue by producing a genuine family policy (e.g., paying welfare to never-married mothers only if they live either with their parents or in supervised accommodation). But that would mean taking political heat.

Something similar may be happening to the immigration issue. California Governor Pete Wilson's position here is another straddle: keep legal, stop illegal. But California Democrats are already matching Wilson on cutting back illegal immigration (at least rhetorically); which forces him and the GOP to choose between losing

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the issue or extending restrictions to legal immigration. A straddle is a temporary device at best.

8. Within each party, however, there form at each pole political groups that are more concerned with victory for their position on the new issue than with their party's electoral success.

True Democrats believe in the benevolence of big government. Forty years ago this world view put them smack dab in the center of the political spectrum; today it puts them to the left of the typical Democratic voter. Witness Hillary Clinton. At every stage of the debate, she favored clinging to bureaucratic health-care solutions that even Democrats in Congress had concluded were politically unsustainable.

While the Democrats' old center moves to the pole, the Republicans' pole has been steadily moving toward the center. The old Republican Party was made up of progressives and fiscal conservatives. For three decades now, the tide has moved away from them toward various grass-roots movements, from anti-tax crusaders through pro-lifers to "Reagan Democrats" angered by their party's domination by the elite. Like the abolitionists and pietistic revivalists of the 1850s, these groups are willing to work with the old party elite, because they believe their time has come. Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, says, "We can take the hits and move on. The energy and enthusiasm of the Republican Party are in the evangelical community."

The Republican forces that prefer internal victory to electoral success are, paradoxically, to be found in the moderate wing. They call for abortion to be removed from the party platform, and collude in attacks on the "Religious Right." This may reflect a snobbish social hostility to evangelical Christians. But most GOP moderates are simply unaware that these newcomers represent a quarter to a third of the GOP's national vote. None of the policies that would drive them away—e.g., "taking abortion out of politics"—has any chance of attracting new (or former) Republican voters in anything like the numbers required to offset such a loss.

9. The polar forces coalesce most rapidly if the party out of power is the one with the greater predisposition toward the new issue.

Most Americans hew to a vision of America, still inchoate in party terms, that is anti-bureaucratic, demands individual responsibility, and wants the American idea spelled out as a set of shared moral values.

About three-quarters of Americans (79 per cent) believe government squanders our tax dollars, and hence want to freeze government spending (71 per cent) and limit terms in Congress (71 per cent); 61 per cent say "government regulation of business does more harm than good"; and 67 per cent want "a smaller government with fewer services." Individual responsibility comes out strongly in public feelings about welfare: 82 per cent believe the welfare system "discourages poor people from finding work," and 84 per cent want "all able-bodied people on welfare to work for their checks." As for moral and spiritual values, 56 per cent of us would not vote for a presidential candidate who did not believe in God, and 74 per cent have made a commitment to Jesus Christ, up from 60 per cent in 1978.

Populist Republicans represent these feelings in all their intensity. A Bush establishment might have repressed any warm response to these issues. The lost 1992 election liberated the GOP to exploit them.

10. If both major parties persist in their straddle or come under the control of the polar forces opposing change, supporters of the new issue at some point form a third party.

The GOP elite is suddenly more sensitive to what is going on. In particular, RNC Chairman Haley Barbour is welcoming the new political forces.

Doubtless he heeded the Canadian warning. Preston Manning and the Reform Party, anti-elite and pro-evangelical, brought Ottawa's elitist government crashing down, from 162 seats in Parliament to a paltry 2. Newt Gingrich is fond of using Canada as a warning to the Democrats. But those whom Manning drove out of Ottawa were not the Liberals (who became the new government), but the Progressive Conservatives, Canadian counterparts of the country-club Republicans.

This was a political earthquake. In the previous two elections, the Tories had won landslide victories. Conventional wisdom had it that western Tory voters might not like the Tory establishment's bilingualism, its wooing of Quebec at the expense of English Canada, or its selection of a metropolitan feminist as party leader, but they had "nowhere else to go." Then, out of nowhere, came the Reform Party. With every financial and organizational advantage, the Tories were blown away because they had pursued the agenda of Canada's national elite rather than that of their own supporters.

This should warn the GOP not to revert to bipartisan moderation after any gains this November. If it does, the new social forces that have fueled those gains will either stay at home or drift off to new third parties offering what the GOP had supposedly stood for. Malcolm Wallop has raised the specter of the Whigs' slow death; 1857 is on more minds than mine.

11. A realignment crisis is precipitated when the centrists lose control of one or both of the major parties—that is, of party policy and nominations—to one or the other of the polar forces.

Max Boot reports in the *Wall Street Journal* that "evangelicals are gaining power in the GOP the old-fashioned way—walking precincts, handing out pamphlets, showing up at party functions. It's a strategy that has worked not only in Virginia . . . evangelicals are now on verge of gaining a big say in the running of the Texas and Minnesota parties. How many new members in the House and Senate now say: *I owe my seat to the Christian Coalition?*"

An even more sincere tribute is this altruistic warning to the GOP from liberal democrat Al Hunt: "There are a half dozen more seats that are now more likely to stay happily Democratic because of religious right candidates." That didn't occur to Kentucy voters when they elected Ron Lewis. But controlling evangelicals would not be enough, anyway. The revolt is bigger than that.

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The dynamic groups at the Republican pole also include secular reformers of the Perotista stripe, libertarian entrepreneurs, and Reagan's alienated Democrats. The GOP centrists have lost control of all of them.

12. If the polar forces supporting the new issue gain control of one major party, realignment may still be averted if they also capture the other major party.

Impossible. Witness the shallow influence of the Progressive Policy Institute, the New Democrat think tank. Populist slogans can disguise policies that extend elitist control: a crime bill that federalizes the problem, a "managed competition" health-care bill that sets us on the road to state medicine, an information superhighway that would give government control of the very future flow of knowledge. But a truly populist vision would mean the disestablishment of the entire network of elites—political, welfarist, regulatory, and cultural—that make up today's Democratic Party.

13. In any other circumstances, however, the crisis eventuates in a realignment, in one of several forms.

a. If the polar forces supporting the new issue gain control at an early stage of the issue's development, realignment may occur without the appearance of a third party.

This will happen if a Republican new wave takes over before 1996. Such a development would resemble the realignment of the 1930s, when Hoover staked out a traditional, fiscally conservative pole that encouraged everyone else to gravitate to FDR's activist vision. A party that captures the new issue would leave Democrats, like Hoover, as people of the past.

b. If they gain control only after the formation of a third party, realignment may occur through absorption of the new party by one of the old ones.

Sundquist argues this is what happened in the 1890s. Both parties resisted the new economic issues, so reformers created a series of third parties, which grew in strength. Polar forces pushing change captured the Democrats in 1896, who then co-opted third-party Populists into the Bryan campaign. Similarly, Perot's sally spoke for a slice of the electorate whose central motivation was reform. Many Perotistas are already migrating to the anti-elite agenda of the radical Republicans.

c. If they gain control at a late stage, realignment may occur through replacement of one of the existing parties by a new party.

This is Sundquist's reading of the 1850s. Crisis came when antislavery forces took control of the Whig Party in 1852. This takeover split the party, and after electoral defeat, the dynamic new leadership put a new party together, the Republicans, interring the Whigs forever. But Sundquist argues that the eventual result would have been the same had antislavery forces lost. This has interesting implications for the present. If the Republicans nominate a polar candidate in 1996, he might be the first stage of reshaping the Republicans into something new. But the same thing could happen if Republicans nominate a country-club team. A Bush redux would prompt a hemorrhage that could bleed the Grand Old Party to death.

d. Realignment can occur through replacement of both of the existing parties by new ones.

This has never happened and seems unlikely now.

14. The realignment reaches its climax in one or more critical elections, but the realigning process may extend over a considerable period before and after the critical election.

Party realignment before the Civil War took a whole decade, and the struggle to crown the New Deal as America's permanent political agenda took 16 years, from 1932 to 1948. The hinge election of this realignment will probably not come before 2000, because the Republicans have yet to confront clearly and fiercely the issue of a corrupt national elite running an incompetent and intrusive government. The signs of such a confrontation would probably include firm pledges to cut taxes (and so to restrain government) and to impose term limits (and so to dismantle the elite).

15. After the election in which the voters make a clear choice on the issue that has polarized the country, polarization gives way to conciliation. As it does, both parties move toward the center and the distance between them narrows.

2000 must be the election that, like 1860 or 1896, asserts a new status quo dominated by Republicans or a new party. But it must be a complete triumph, breaking the current elite's grip on government, before the Democrats will come along. Sundquist observes that Reagan was unable to achieve real realignment, even within his own party. By 1988, the Republicans had returned to "normal political behavior." So realignment could again founder, unless the new issue finds its voice, the voice its movement, and the movement its leader.

16. However, if new issues arise that coincide with the existing line of party cleavage, they reinforce the existing alignment.

This can't happen, because the Democrats built their ideology to suit the world of industrial society, the workers' world. The global economic revolution has swept that world away.

TO SAY THAT realignment is possible is not to say it will happen. The elite may reign forever over an angry majority of Americans. But Sundquist's preconditions suggest that Big Change is out there, waiting. Yet no one in the Imperial City wants to talk about it.

We are hampered by having lived most of our lives in a stable political world where Big Change just didn't happen. So specialists who know a lot about less stable times get hung up on the differences. Sundquist himself demonstrated this impulse when I interviewed him. He told me, "The U.S. was a very different society in the 1850s. There were fewer issues then; they were simpler. Only a single, homogeneous segment of the population had the franchise. Today, it's all different."

Really. □

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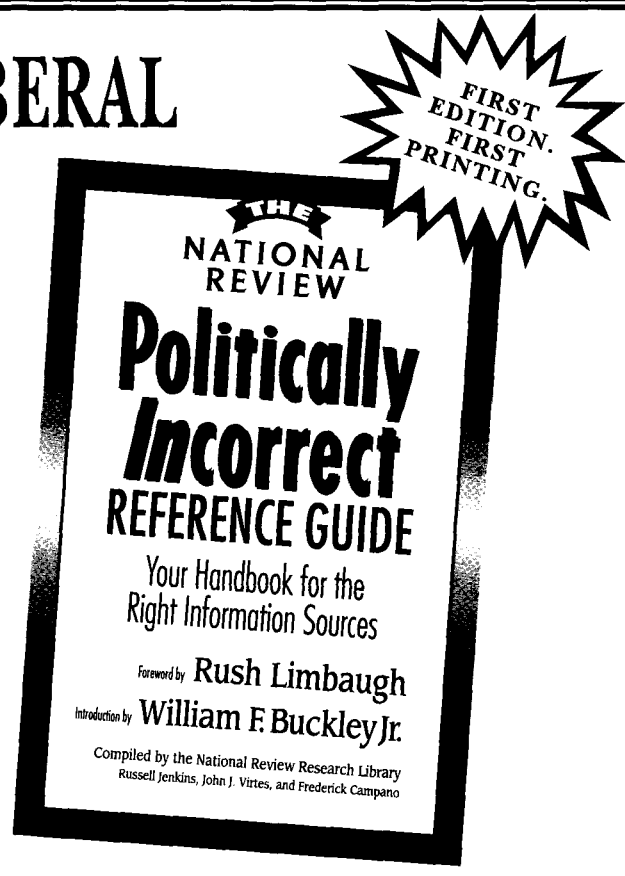

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The Weld Record

KING OF THE YUPPIE REPUBLICANS

Massachusetts's Bill Weld is a leading light of the Tight Money/Loose Morals Republicans. But how tight is his money really? A look at the current state of Taxachusetts.

RICHARD F. ADAIR

GOVERNOR William F. Weld has cultivated a national reputation as a different kind of Republican politician, a reputation calculated to appeal to a new breed of voter. The educated classes have come to doubt the linchpin of the progressive faith: the belief that an enlightened, expanding public sector, fueled by ever higher taxes, can solve all social problems and drive the economic engine of a mixed economy. But despite their growing misgivings about the liberal economic agenda, many young professionals are leery of the danger, real or imagined, that conservatives are trying to impose fundamentalist religious values on American public policy.

Enter Bill Weld, elected governor of arguably the most liberal state in the nation, Massachusetts, in 1990, not generally a good year for Republicans. Weld claims to be pro-choice and pro-gay-rights but anti-tax, jettisoning the cumbersome baggage of the Religious Right while espousing economic principles that could move the Republican Party toward majority status. He took charge right away, so the story goes, slashing spending, slashing taxes, balancing the books, and putting the state's fiscal affairs back in order. That is the image; the real story is a bit more complicated.

To understand Massachusetts voters' swing toward the Republican Party in 1990, one must grasp the magnitude of the disaster that occurred in the last years of the Dukakis administration. Having been ousted by Edward J. King in the 1978 Democratic primary, Michael Dukakis returned to office in 1983 just in time to see the state's economy take off. High technology, financial services, booming real-estate development, and a generous infusion from the Reagan defense buildup resulted in an annual rise in personal income averaging about 8 per cent by the mid Eighties. Under the impetus of new and expanded programs, the state bureaucracy flourished, as did the private army of contractors and consultants—the "technocrats." Best of all, from Dukakis's point of view, all this happened without his having to run deficits or raise taxes. As the good times rolled on, Dukakis took full credit for the Massachusetts Miracle.

No Escape

THE "miracle" began to unravel at a very inconvenient time for Mr. Dukakis, right in the midst of his 1988 presidential campaign. The surpluses accumulated in the early years of his administration were being spent to balance the budget, which was ballooning with double-digit increases. As the state's economy turned sour, the optimistic revenue projections on which the budget for fiscal year 1988 had been based failed to materialize, and Dukakis had to order departments not to spend appropriated funds. A general tax increase was politically unthinkable for the presidential candidate, but the sales tax was extended to cigarettes, on top of the existing excise tax. The FY 1989 budget also included revenue-enhancing features such as doubling the minimum corporate tax and vesting in the governor the authority to raise state fees. As Dukakis campaigned for President bragging about how he had balanced another budget, the state began the short-term borrowing of hundreds of millions of dollars to pay its weekly operating expenses.

In 1989 and 1990 Dukakis and the legislature imposed a cascade of major tax increases in a futile attempt to stanch the flow of red ink. The 5 per cent sales tax was extended to energy and telecommunications. The gasoline tax was raised from 10 cents to 21 cents per gallon. The excise tax on deeds was doubled. But it was what happened to the state income-tax rates that left taxpayers reeling. On July 26, 1989, the legislature approved a supposedly temporary rate increase, raising the flat-rate income tax from 5 per cent to 5.375 per cent effective June 30, 1989, and doubling the increase, for a new rate of 5.75 per cent from January 1, 1990 to January 1, 1991; on that date both increases were to ex-

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pire, returning the rate to 5 per cent. But before the taxpayers could catch their breath, on July 18, 1990, the legislature raised the rate again, retroactive to January 1, making the 1990 rate 5.95 per cent, and also voted in a further temporary increase to 6.25 per cent from January 1, 1991 to January 1, 1992. And while the July 1989 increase had been pretty much restricted to wages and salaries, the July 1990 act extended the new rates to interest from Massachusetts bank accounts, rental income, pension and annuity income, and IRA and Keogh distributions; it also raised the tax on capital gains and out-of-state interest and dividends from 10 per cent to 12 per cent. There were cuts in state services and local aid, and still the budget could not be balanced.

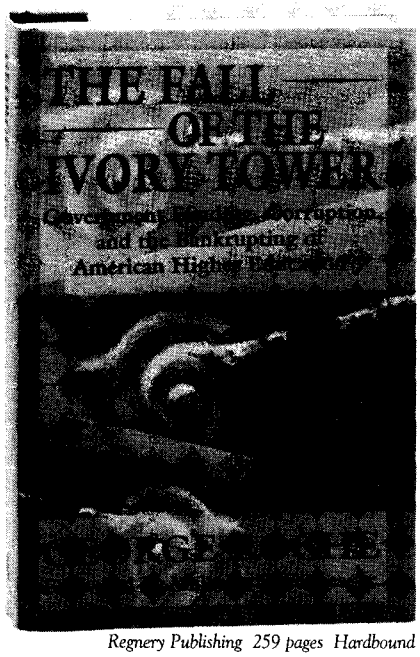
Evolution of a Candidate

IT WAS against the backdrop of hemorrhaging deficits and spiraling taxes that the political evolution of candidate Bill Weld began. If ever there was a year in which a Republican could be elected governor of Massachusetts, 1990 was it. But in the summer and fall of 1989, when the potential candidates began jockeying for position, the wealthy Yankee Weld had an image problem among Republican regulars. Long out of power, the Massachusetts Republican Party had changed. The new activists were definitely more conservative and somewhat alienated; the noblesse-oblige liberalism of the Brahmins was no longer fashionable.

So when Citizens for Limited Taxation launched a campaign to roll back taxes, Weld, anxious to prove his conservatism, embraced it wholeheartedly. A former U.S. Attorney, he would campaign as "tough on crime and tough on taxes." After an unexpectedly hard-fought primary against Steven Pierce, a movement conservative, Weld won the November election—in no small part because voters were put off by the take-no-prisoners style of his opponent, Boston University President John Silber. The CLT's tax-rollback initiative lost, however, and so Weld took office facing an income-tax rate of 6.25 per cent and a likely deficit of $700 million.

Once again he was in the right place at the right time: just then the state reaped a windfall in federal funds, $525 million in past-due reimbursements from Medicaid, which could be applied partly to FY 1991 and partly to FY 1992. The Weld administration also managed to save $480 million before the fiscal year ended on June 30, mostly by furloughing state workers and withholding some payments. Much of the money saved by those means had to be paid later, but for the moment further borrowing had been avoided, and the fiscal year ended with a small surplus. Weld's first budget request, for FY 1992, was $13 billion; the budget he signed into law came to $12.9 billion, three-quarters of a billion less than what had been spent in FY 1991.

This was when the word went out across the land that a massive spending cut had been achieved. But an initial budget is one thing and actual spending—the true measure of fiscal performance—is another. In FY 1992



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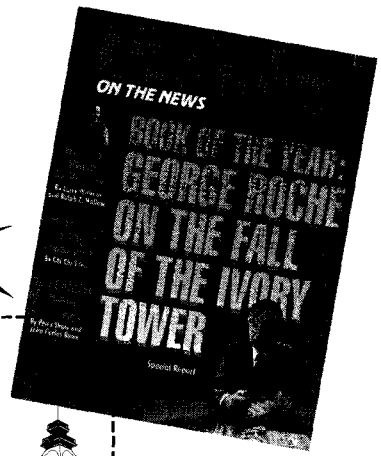

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actual spending came to $13.416 billion, half a billion over budget. (All actual-spending figures cited here are from the Massachusetts Comptroller's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.) And holding spending even to that level required cutting local aid by $320 million (which violated a campaign pledge) and rolling over $260 million in debt; there was also a late supplemental appropriation which the administration chose to account for in FY 1993, though it was not included in the budget enacted for that year. Still, actual spending was $250 million less than the $13.665 billion spent in FY 1991—the first time Massachusetts spending had been cut from one year to the next in about three decades.

Meanwhile, in January 1992, the Weld administration unveiled its FY 1993 request for $13.992 billion. The legislature produced a budget of about $14.5 billion. Weld exercised his veto powers and signed into law a budget of $14.18 billion. Actual spending for FY 1993 totaled $14.942 billion, a whopping increase over FY 1992 of $1.526 billion, or 11.37 per cent.

In January 1993 Weld's budget request for FY 1994 was $15.2 billion. When an accurate account is rendered, actual spending for FY 1994 will probably prove to be about $15.7 billion. The request for FY 1995 was for $16.2 billion, but the budget enacted was just under $16.4 billion; it is too early to anticipate the extent of supplemental appropriations. The legislature must share the blame for increased spending, but note that since FY 1992, Weld's initial budget requests have been increasing by about a billion dollars per year.

Disappearing Cuts

SINCE Massachusetts was on the brink of bankruptcy when Weld took office, one might wonder how the state can afford to spend so much, especially since Weld is fond of saying that he has cut taxes five times. A supply-side miracle? Let's take a look at the Weld tax cuts. Under scrutiny, they behave a lot like the Weld spending cuts.

The first "tax cut" was repeal of the sales tax on services. The truth is there never was a sales tax on services. Late in 1990, after the election, a service tax was enacted. Weld opposed it. So did his opponent, John Silber, who had been out front in his opposition to the measure since its inception. Under heavy lobbying from lawyers, accountants, and insurance agents, the legislature readily acceded to Governor-elect Weld's request to delay implementation from January 1 to March 6. The tax was repealed on March 7. Technically it was in effect for one day, but the state revenue department never collected a dime. Weld does deserve part of the credit for preventing a tax increase which would have cost the taxpayers about $165 million a year, but you can't cut a tax that never was, and this one was dead on arrival.

"Welcome to the City Zoo. I'd like to talk to you about some budget cuts."

When Weld took office on January 3, 1991, as we have seen, the Massachusetts flat-rate income tax had recently been raised to a permanent rate of 5.95 per cent on most income, with a temporary rate of 6.25 per cent effective from January 1, 1991 to January 1, 1992. There was some talk in the legislature about extending the higher rate. The governor threatened to veto any extension, but he never had to. There weren't enough votes in the Democratic legislature to continue the higher rate. Still, taxes did come down, saving the taxpayers about $230 million per year. Let's be generous and once again give Weld partial credit for lowering the tax on most income to the highest permanent rate in Massachusetts history, where it stands today.

Next, the Weld administration claims credit for enacting a research-and-development tax credit. Actually, this credit was introduced by Democrats in the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, it is true that certain people doing specified things have had their tax burden lightened by a grand total of about $34 million per year.

In July 1992, Weld signed legislation to phase out the Massachusetts estate tax over five years. This one too was initiated by Democrats in the legislature. It has the distinction of being the only unquestionable tax cut to take place under Weld, though most of it hasn't happened yet. Taxpayer savings for 1993 totaled about $25 million; the savings will increase in later years.

Last, and probably least, is the tripling of the investment tax credit, saving selected taxpayers about $20 million in FY 1993. Weld proposed this one in September 1992. It had first been proposed by the House Ways and Means Committee in the spring budget deliberations, but the legislature had failed to act on it. It was enacted into law the following year.

For all the tax cuts, the bottom line is that the Weld administration, in its four-year term, will have collected more taxes, not just in dollars, but per capita and as a percentage of income, than have ever been collected before in any four-year period in the history of Massachusetts. Simply put, the budgets are being balanced by higher taxes.

Sometimes, however, proposed tax cuts create a perception of the real thing, particularly when publicized out of state. In January 1992, Weld proposed in his budget request a cut in the state income tax from 5.95 per cent to 5.75 per cent. In his State of the State message, he offered this cut as the first in a series of yearly cuts until the pre-1989 rate of 5 per cent was restored. The legislature refused to consider the tax cut at all because the Democratic leadership claimed that the projected

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spending figures in the budget request were unrealistically low. (As we have seen, they had a point: that was the year Weld's initial budget request was $13.992 billion, and actual spending came in at $14.942 billion). In January 1993, the governor suggested a more modest cut, to 5.85 per cent. This one never made it into the budget debate at all—but the legislature had not heard the last of it.

On August 11, 1993, in response to enactment of President Clinton's federal tax package, Weld proposed a $207-million state tax cut. Weld's proposal included a tenth-of-a-point cut in the income tax effective January 1, 1994 (essentially the same cut he had asked for in January 1993), a cut of 3.4 cents per gallon in the state's gasoline tax effective October 1, 1993 (exactly offsetting Clinton's federal gasoline-tax increase, scheduled to take effect the same day), a modest increase in the tax threshold for the working poor, and a healthy increase in the exemption on bank interest for senior citizens.

"The tax cuts filed today are intended to keep the Clinton taxes from derailing our momentum here in Massachusetts," Weld declared. He maintained he had a good chance of getting the tax cut through, comparing it to the repeal of the sales tax on services in 1991 (the tax that never was) when some of the legislative leaders had thought he didn't have the votes. "If the rank-and-file legislators hear from their constituents during the summer recess as to what people out there think about these federal tax hikes, this package is going to pass," he predicted.

The White House took the bait. Weld was attempting to "score political points" at Clinton's expense. "It is what we expect from the Republicans," said Deputy Press Secretary Lorraine Voles. "We have had a lot of partisan attacks on the plan, yet they have never put forward a credible plan." Communications Director Mark Gearan said "Governor Weld is factually incorrect" when he suggests all taxpayers are being harmed.

Whenever a governor of the opposition party can elicit an angry response from the White House, it is a political hit. When the White House response is lame, the hit is for extra bases. And when all this occurs on the eve of a highly publicized meeting of the National Governors' Association, it is out of the ballpark. In Massachusetts, Barbara Anderson, executive director of Citizens for Limited Taxation, when asked if Weld's proposal wasn't a cynical political ploy, said, "It's politically brilliant, and political brilliance in defense of the taxpayer is no sin." Weld made the rounds of the state's radio talk shows, hyping his proposal, and then headed for the Governors' Association meeting in Tulsa like a conquering hero. With the nation's eyes on its governors, he was the only one who had responded to Clinton's tax increases. Basking in the national spotlight, he spun his favorite tale to anyone who would listen. He had cut taxes five times and still revenues were rising. Now, in a bold counterstroke to Clinton, he was going to cut taxes again. Great theater! But what happened in Massachusetts? Nothing.

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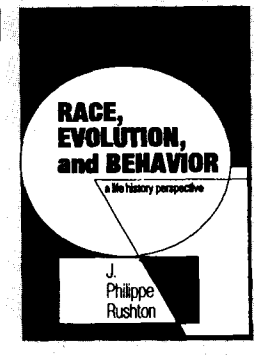

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J. Philippe Rushton

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every appropriation requested or enacted specify the anticipated revenue source to pay for it. So before the Democratic leaders in the legislature would consider a tax-cut bill, they demanded to know where the governor proposed to cut spending. Weld responded that he would find the savings in "discretionary spending" after the tax cut was enacted. His response, falling back on the populist tax-limitation dictum that tax cuts force discipline on government, ensured that the tax cut was dead for fiscal year 1994.

Weld's 1995 budget request included much the same tax-cut package, to take effect July 1. In a full fiscal year it would save the taxpayers an estimated $270 million. The budget also included an anticipated $125 million in revenues from riverboat casinos and from slot machines at race tracks. Weld wanted the franchising of such gambling activities approved with the budget, but House Ways and Means Chairman Thomas Finneran deleted the provision, calling the revenue figures "speculative" and saying the gambling question was too important socially not to be treated separately. The legislature gave some modest relief to the working poor and extended the investment tax credit to leased equipment; but the income-tax rate still stands at 5.95 per cent, and no one is talking any more about reducing the gasoline tax. Sometimes "political brilliance" is merely in defense of favorable publicity.

Let Us Count the Ways

WHAT HAS changed in Massachusetts? There has been no serious restructuring of state government, no consolidation or elimination of cabinet secretariats. Most state managers are holdovers from the Dukakis administration. The number of state employees has been reduced, but it had already been declining for three years before Weld took office. Much has been made of Weld's privatization, but the only form of privatization Massachusetts has seen is the contracting out of a few more state services. There is no political sacrifice involved; the real patronage these days is in the contracts.

Unemployment in Massachusetts jumped to 9 per cent in 1991. Human-service costs rose accordingly and have come down a little since. The General Relief program has been replaced by Emergency Aid, reducing the rolls for non-AFDC welfare, at least until the courts get around to ordering people reinstated. After more than three years in office, Weld has at last petitioned the Federal Government for a waiver on AFDC. Announced with the budget request for fiscal year 1995, his welfare-reform plan calls for denying payments to able-bodied welfare recipients and putting the money instead into job training, medical insurance, and day care. Workfare will provide for those who are unable to find a job. The plan is supposed to save money.

It was inevitable that the governor's supporters would declare the Weld administration a "*real* Massachusetts Miracle." Massachusetts went into the recession early and was slow to come out of it, but the economy is now growing steadily, providing increasing revenues for state government. But the growing state budget is precariously balanced, and the current growth rate doesn't really compare with the boom of the mid Eighties. The slightest economic downturn could cause fiscal déjà vu. In that respect the current "miracle" is similar to the original, but with higher taxes.

On January 28, 1993, *Boston Globe* statehouse reporters Frank Phillips and Scott Lehigh covered the announcement of Weld's budget proposal for FY 1994. They characterized it as "chock full of new spending, 'investments,' and program expansions, all of which the Republican governor laid out at a press conference that was reminiscent of former Governor Dukakis's budget presentations during the high-flying 1980s." In Massachusetts, the more things change, the more they stay the same. □

The Late, Great Health-Care Crisis

PHYSICIANS HEAL THEMSELVES

The good news for consumers—declining health-care inflation—is bad news for the White House.

LAWRENCE KUDLOW & STEPHEN MOORE

LAST October President Clinton kicked off the health-care debate by insisting that "only comprehensive reform will slow the frightening rate of increase in health-care costs." From day one even those who rejected his remedies agreed on the nature of the problem: soaring costs, which led in turn to a growing share of national output consumed by health care, to huge federal budget deficits, and to large numbers of Americans going uninsured.

The latest numbers on inflation in health-care costs could not have arrived at a more inconvenient time for the White House. Statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Labor show that health-care inflation is slowing dramatically. This collides squarely with the premise underlying the push for a radical overhaul of our current health-care system.

The Labor Department reports that in the first six months of 1994 health-care costs grew at an annual rate of just 4.5 per cent, the smallest rise in twenty years. Even the real rate of increase in health-care costs has dipped from 4.4 per cent in 1990 and 1991 to a predicted 1.9 per cent this year.

Virtually every component of health-care inflation is on a downward path—hospital costs, physician services, drug prices. Employers are starting to report that increases in their medical-

Mr. Kudlow is NR*'s economics editor. Mr. Moore is director of fiscal-policy studies at the Cato Institute.*

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insurance costs are slowing down. The real rate of increase in employer-health-plan costs was 5 per cent last year. That's nothing to celebrate, but it is half the rate of increase in the late 1980s and early 1990s, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute. The Chamber of Commerce reports in its most recent member survey that medical-insurance premiums were up by only 1 per cent in 1992.

Some of the reduction in health-care inflation is a dividend from lower overall inflation. But that's not the whole story. Although health-care costs continue to outpace consumer prices in general, in the last few years the difference between health-care inflation and overall inflation has been chopped in half.

Some say that it is jawboning by the Clintons and the mere threat of price controls that have driven down prices. There probably is some truth to the notion that just the specter of the economically muddle-headed Clinton and Clinton Lite plans has accelerated self-reform in medicine. But health-care inflation started tumbling in late 1990, long before Bill and Hillary came to Washington.

Competitive forces, not government controls, are the key. "Markets self-correct, and this one is well into that process," says Mitchell Daniels, vice president of Eli Lilly. "As usual, the politicians are miles behind the market." A recent analysis of the medical marketplace by business writer James Glassman of the *Washington Post* concurs. Glassman writes that "the free play of supply and demand is already working. . . . Private firms are putting intense pressure on insurance companies to freeze or cut premiums, and the insurance companies are putting pressure on hospitals and doctors and pharmaceutical manufacturers." Other factors contributing to the slowdown in cost increases include the move toward generic drugs and greater reliance on health-insurance policies that require patient cost sharing.

The Medicaid Nightmare

THERE IS one sector of the health-care industry where "rampant inflation" can still be labeled a crisis, and that is government programs. Even with overall health-care inflation declining, Medicaid remains a nightmare of stampeding costs. In 1989 the program's costs increased by 13 per cent, in 1990 by 18 per cent, in 1991 by 30 per cent, in 1992 by 21 percent, and in 1993 by 20 per cent. Since 1989 Medicaid has grown at five times the rate of the CPI. Even the *Washington Post*'s recent feature on the history of Medicaid notes wistfully: "It seems clear the Federal Government has lost control of this program."

The person most responsible for this fiscal black hole is Representative Henry Waxman (D., Calif.), nicknamed the Trillion-Dollar Man to signify the long-term impact of his Medicaid expansions. Waxman openly boasts that he has spent the past 15 years converting Medicaid into a de facto national health-insurance program. Twenty-four separate Medicaid expansions were instituted in the 1980s, thanks mostly to him. They have added nearly $20 billion to Medicaid's price tag for this year alone. The program is now so generous that in some states a family of four can have an income of up to $40,000 and still qualify. The history of Medicaid expansions, concedes Ron Wyden (D., Ore.), a member of Wax-

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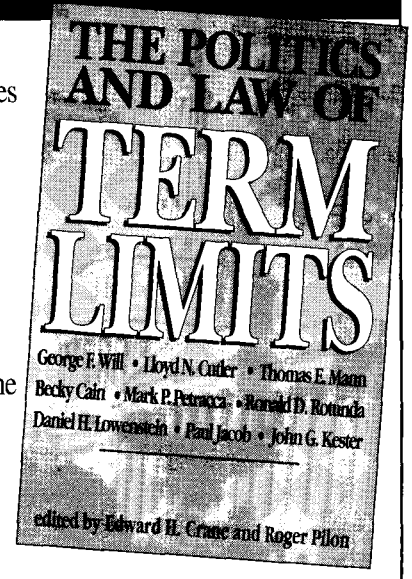

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man's Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, is that "costs were always greater than anticipated." It's not surprising that most Americans are reluctant to give people like Waxman and Wyden the responsibility for cost containment under a Clinton Lite health-care system.

Although both Bill and Hillary Clinton have at various times blamed the health-care inflation crisis on "greedy" drug companies, insurance companies, and private hospitals, the truth is that government programs, principally Medicare and Medicaid, have been the engine of health-care inflation for more than a quarter-century. From 1950 to 1965—the 15 years before Medicare and Medicaid—health-care costs grew at 3.5 per cent a year. But since 1966, the health-care inflation rate has more than doubled, to 7.8 per cent.

This is not just coincidental. Since 1966 private-sector health costs have grown by about 7 per cent a year, while government programs have grown by roughly 15 per cent a year—despite a series of laws passed by Congress in the 1980s and early 1990s to "control government costs" through price controls and other measures.

The performance of Medicare and Medicaid makes one thing clear: any health-care legislation that expands government programs will almost certainly fuel inflation. "Over the last quarter-century," admits Senate Finance Committee Chairman Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D., N.Y.), "we have all been wrong on the costs of entitlements." This is a vast understatement. The Hospital Insurance program was supposed to cost $9 billion in 1990. Instead it cost $67 billion—a *600 per cent* forecasting error. The propensity to underestimate the cost of new entitlements is not something unique to Medicare. A recent Citizens for a Sound Economy report shows that Social Security now costs six times as much as was projected as recently as 1965; federal disability insurance costs nine times as much as originally predicted.

Even with overall health-care inflation slowing, reform of government health programs is necessary. Medicare is already teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. By 1998 the program's expenditures will begin to outpace payroll-tax revenues, and the deficit will widen rapidly. For the program to remain financially viable, the payroll tax would have to rise from 2 per cent of taxable payroll today to a staggering 24 per cent by 2020, according to calculations by Haeworth Robertson, former chief actuary of the Social Security Administration.

These numbers underscore the absurdity of the current reform proposals. House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt's bill would create "Medicare Part C," almost doubling the number of Americans on this nearly insolvent program. If there are truly 37 million uninsured Americans, and even if it takes only $2,000 a year to cover each one, this would cost taxpayers about $75 billion a year.

The Clinton Lite plans do not solve the essence of the health-care problem, which is that the vast majority of Americans are overinsured, not underinsured. As economist Stan Liebowitz of the University of Texas at Dallas writes in a new Cato Institute study: "The major culprit in the seemingly endless rise in health-care costs is the removal of the patient as a major participant in the financial and medical choices that are currently being made by others." Since 1960 the share of medical bills paid by patients has dropped from 58 to 20 per cent, while the share paid by government has risen from 22 to 42 per cent; 95 per cent of hospital bills are now paid through government or private insurance. Not surprisingly, hospital fees have long been the fastest growing component of health-care costs.

The quick and simple way to fix the system, slow inflation further, and make health insurance more affordable is through Medical Savings Accounts. These accounts would essentially force patients to be cost-conscious consumers. Each American could put $3,000 a year into a personal health account similar to an IRA. Any unused money would eventually be rolled over into a personal IRA to be spent at retirement. This approach not only cuts out the insurance and government middlemen for minor expenses but gives consumers an incentive to seek low-cost care.

If Congress continues to resist these sensible changes, it should at least follow the Hippocratic injunction: "First, do no harm." The self-reforms transforming the medical marketplace are far more promising than the proposals moving through Congress. The real looming crisis in health care today is the possibility that Congress will manage to pass "broad-based reform" after all. □

Where Will All the Rifles Go?

CONCEALED WEAPONS

Congress can pass a law banning an arbitrary list of firearms, but it can't make Americans obey it.

BRYAN R. JOHNSON

CONGRESS and the American people have an agreement: Congress can create laws, but they should be necessary and effective. In return, once a law is passed, the people (or most of them, anyway) will obey it. When that agreement breaks down, so does the rule of law. Ineffective laws, or laws that encroach too much on the private domain, breed cynicism, contempt, and non-compliance.

One piece of legislation that will be both ineffective and intrusive is the so-called "assault-weapon ban" approved by Congress last month as part of the

Mr. Johnson is a businessman and freelance writer who lives in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He is heavily armed.

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Omnibus Crime Bill. The ban, introduced by Representative Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.), forbids the manufacture and sale of certain semi-automatic firearms and of ammunition magazines that hold more than ten rounds.

Although the stated purpose of the ban—as of the bill as a whole—is to reduce crime, no well-informed person can reasonably expect it to do so. Writing in the *New York Times* just before passage of the bill, gun-control advocate Osha Gray Davidson observed: "Such a ban would not make our streets safer, and it would not reduce gun violence. Perhaps the best thing that can be said about the measure is that the NRA is against it. But even the extremists in charge of the rifle association can sometimes be right, and they happen to be right on this one. The 19 models of 'assault weapons' that would be banned by this bill are indistinguishable from dozens of other guns that would not be."

Davidson's reference to "19 models" shows how people were misled by the floor debates on the bill. Although Schumer kept insisting that only 19 firearms fell under the ban, a provision banning all "copycat" versions of the 19 firearms would bring the total up to at least 184 current models. And the bill's much-ballyhooed list of 650 "protected" firearms is a red herring. The bolt-action, lever, pump, and single-shot rifles and shotguns on that list would not have fallen under the bill's definition of "assault weapon" in any case.

Remember Waco?

ONE OF the law's great dangers is that it gives the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms the authority to add to the list of banned guns without additional legislation. Gun owners—knowing that many of the other firearms they own are not substantially different from the ones covered by the ban—are fearful that the list will expand to include virtually all semi-automatic rifles and shotguns. The BATF has certainly shown enthusiasm for expanding its list of "destructive devices" by adding several models of revolver-type shotguns. And the bureau recently used administrative sleight of hand to add a popular type of rifle ammunition

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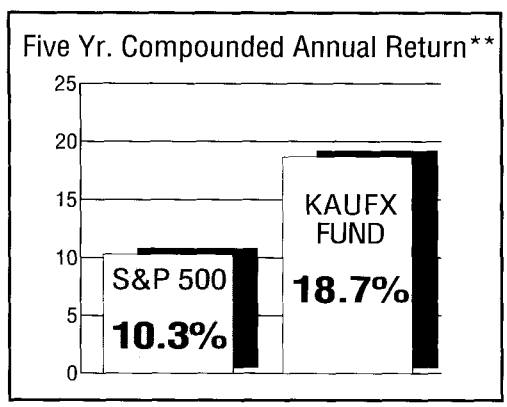

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to its list of "cop killer" handgun bullets.

In addition to prohibiting the future manufacture and sale of "assault weapons," the bill originally required everyone who currently owns one of the listed firearms to register it with the BATF. It was not clear at press time whether this requirement was in the final version, but another bill, "Brady II," includes a similar provision. Will gun owners comply? The punishment if they don't (and if they get caught) will be stiff: as much as a $1,000 fine, up to 6 months in jail, or both. Even so, the experience with similar bans adopted by cities and states suggests that gun owners will resist the law in massive numbers.

Consider the case of New York City. Twenty-five years ago, New York instituted city-wide registration of all rifles and shotguns assuring everyone that the registration list would never be used for confiscation. In 1990, when the city decided to ban certain semi-automatic rifles, the police went to that very same registration list to find the names and addresses of everyone who owned such rifles. These owners received letters from the police informing them that they had three choices: remove the rifles from the city limits, render them inoperative, or turn them in to the police. The owners were required to mail a form to the police, stating how they had complied.

The compliance rate was fantastic—98 per cent of the people on the list mailed in the forms. But gun-control scholar Stephen Halbrook reports that almost all the forms claimed the rifles had been removed from the city. No proof was required, and although there is a stiff penalty for making a false statement on the form, many of the banned guns may still be in the owners' New York City homes. Paul Blackman, research coordinator at the National Rifle Association, further notes that the 98 per cent compliance figure assumes that all rifles and shotguns were actually registered 25 years ago. He estimates that at least 10,000 long guns, and perhaps as many as 25,000, were never registered to begin with.

In 1990 California banned a number of semi-automatic weapons, using a list similar to that in the new federal law. Although no one really knew the exact number of such guns in the state, the government estimated (by assuming that the number per capita was similar to that in other states) that there were about 600,000. After two years (and several amnesties), only 60,000 of these guns had been registered. Even that number is inflated; owing to confusion over exactly which firearms fell under the ban, as many as half of the guns registered did not actually have to be.

In New Jersey, a similar ban brought even less compliance. According to the *New York Times*, more than a year after the ban went into effect less than 2 per cent of the estimated number had been registered, destroyed, or turned in. But perhaps the most eye-opening example of non-compliance is Denver, where only *1* per cent of "assault weapon" owners complied with a 1990 registration law.

A Question of Trust

THE United States is not the first country to experiment with registration. In his 1992 book *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?*, David B. Kopel, director of research at the Independence Institute, compares gun ownership and gun control in Japan, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Switzerland, and the United States. He finds that a pool of unregistered weapons exists even in countries with strict gun control. Great Britain, long cited as a model of how registration can work, had a 67 per cent non-compliance rate five years after a shotgun-registration law was passed.

Kopel finds that compliance is greatest where the government does not attempt sweeping bans and where the people trust the government and police to administer the gun laws fairly. Noting the generally amicable relations between New Zealand gun owners and the police, Kopel asks:

> Where should American gun owners turn if they wish to trust police administrators? To New York City, where the police department has refused to issue legally required licenses, even when commanded by courts to do so? The department refused even to hand out blank application forms. To Gary, Indiana, where the police also followed orders never to give anyone license application forms? To New Jersey, where the law requires that the authorities act on gun-license applications within thirty days, but delays of several months are common, and some applications are delayed for years, for no valid reason? To St. Louis, where gun permits have routinely been denied to homosexuals, non-voters, and wives who lack their husbands' permission? New Zealand gun owners have good reason to trust their nation's police to administer laws fairly; United States gun owners have every reason not to.

The countries studied by Kopel were all democracies, but non-compliance with gun control exists under dictatorships as well. The NRA's Paul Blackman recalls a conversation he had a number of years ago with a Yugoslavian journalist. The journalist asked why the NRA was so strongly opposed to the registration of firearms. Blackman explained that registration might ultimately lead to confiscation. "Of *course*," the Yugoslavian agreed, "but that's why we keep *other* guns buried in our back yard."

Kopel believes non-compliance with the federal "assault weapon" ban will be between 90 and 99 per cent, primarily because of the fear that registration of the firearms on the list is just the first step toward confiscation, followed by registration (and future confiscation) of additional firearms. If so many gun owners are unwilling to register their firearms, what will they do with them? Survivalists and extremist groups such as the Minutemen of the 1960s have had long experience with hiding arms, but the interest in what is euphemistically called "long-term storage" has increased dramatically since 1990. At least one how-to book on the subject has been published, and several companies now offer supplies that help protect long metal objects from rust for several years. The firearms press reports that more and more gun owners are buying pieces of nine-inch-diameter PVC pipe with end caps.

Even the largest mainstream gun magazine, *Guns & Ammo*, has broached the subject of burying firearms. Part of the Petersen chain of hobby magazines (which includes *Motor Trend* and *Skin Diver*), *Guns & Ammo* is usually concerned with showcasing new products for sport shooters, but it finds that it has to be more politically minded than its sister magazines (after all, no one is trying to ban oxygen tanks for skin divers). Hence the May 1994 issue of the magazine

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carried an article entitled "Final Option: Bury Your Guns!" The piece includes step-by-step instructions for preparing firearms and ammunition for long-term storage and offers hints on how to avoid detection of the buried cache. Keep in mind that this is a *hobby* magazine, not a publication aimed at the survivalist fringe.

The profile of people who are caching firearms does not fit the usual Bubba-with-a-pickup stereotype of gun owners. A writer for a shooting-industry publication reports that doctors, lawyers, and even judges are among the people who have privately told him they are creating their own "cemeteries" of firearms. When suspicion of the government's motives and fear of its future actions extends into the professional and legal community, it's clear a gap has opened between government policy and the public's desires.

Gun owners see measures such as the "assault weapon" ban as attacks on law-abiding citizens. Gary Kleck, professor of criminology at Florida State University, notes that "assault weapons, as defined in various state bans—and the Feinstein bill is more narrow than many of these other lists—account for only one-half of 1 per cent of all firearms used in violent crimes. That means that the firearms on the Feinstein list are even less likely to be used by criminals." In response to the assertion that the 19 firearms listed in the federal law are the favored weapons of gangs and drug dealers, Kleck says only one, the TEC-9, appears to be favored by criminals. The other types show up no more often in violent crimes than would be expected in a random selection. So even if a gun ban actually *worked*, in the sense of removing these guns from the hands of all criminals, its effect on violent crime would be negligible.

At its heart, the "assault weapon" ban conveys to American citizens the message that Congress does not trust them to possess an inanimate object. Such contempt of the people does little to encourage a feeling of trust or a willingness to comply with the law. It has long been a truism in the military that an officer should never give an order he knows will not be obeyed. Congress should ponder the implications of passing laws that will do nothing to inhibit criminals and that millions of heretofore law-abiding Americans will defy. □

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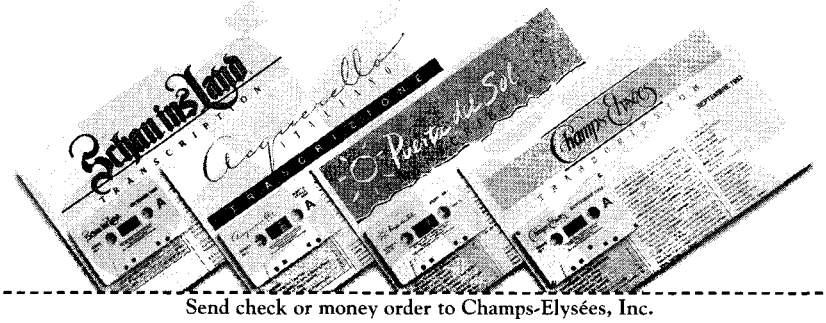

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The War against Chlorine

BAD CHEMISTRY

The trade-off: an unproven risk of future cancers, versus irreparable harm to the economy and the public health.

BEN BOLCH & HAROLD LYONS

SINCE THE founding of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, environmental regulations have, by the EPA's own estimate, cost the American people more than $1.4 trillion. Now environmentalist groups such as Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Federation are demanding a ban on chlorine, and President Clinton's proposal for the Clean Water Act includes this statement: "The Administration will develop a national strategy for substituting, reducing, or prohibiting the use of chlorine and chlorinated compounds."

It is hard even to imagine how different our lives would be without chlorine and its compounds. The element is used in the preparation or the final product of the vast majority of pharmaceuticals, including drugs that treat millions of Americans daily for arthritis, fungal infections, depression, glaucoma, malaria, heart disease, cancer, and a host of other problems. It is used to purify 98 per cent of our drinking water, a method that has made waterborne disease a rarity. It is associated in one way or another with over a million jobs and has been estimated to touch over a third of our gross domestic product, including the manufacture of water pipes, paper, household bleach, furniture covers, flame retardants, linoleum, photographic film, compact discs, pesticides, and herbicides. In short, chlorine is used by just about every person in the United States every day of his life. Chlorine is so important to America's economy and to Americans' health and safety that the dangers would have to be great indeed to justify a ban.

The argument for eliminating chlorine runs as follows: Since some compounds of chlorine (dioxin, DDT, PCBs, and chloroform) have been found to be or are alleged to be harmful, there *may* be others that are also harmful. Since many thousands of industrial processes use chlorine—more than can easily be controlled by the environmental police—the only safe thing to do is to eliminate *all* industrial chlorine compounds. At least the environmentalists stop short of banning the more than a thousand natural chlorine compounds (including the most ubiquitous, sodium chloride, or table salt).

The idea of condemning all chlorine compounds because of the alleged or actual toxicity of a few of them is scientifically preposterous. Philippe Shubik, a toxicologist and cancer researcher at Oxford University, spoke for most scientists when he said this kind of blanket condemnation was "abhorrent" to any rigorous toxicologist. Furthermore, even the cases against some of the more notorious chlorinated compounds are far from conclusive. Dioxin, for example, is the chlorine compound that led to the evacuations of both Love Canal, New York, and Times Beach, Missouri. It was described in a 1979 *Atlantic Monthly* article by environmental reporter Michael Brown as toxic "beyond imagination"—so toxic, Brown wrote, that if three ounces were distributed among a million people, all would die. Yet in July 1976 an explosion in Seveso, Italy, distributed three *pounds* of dioxin over 700 acres and led to some of the highest blood concentrations of the chemical ever measured. The only ill effect noted in nearly two decades of studying the people affected by the explosion was a form of acne.

But environmental scientists seem unable to leave dioxin alone. A new study led by Pier Alberto Bertazzi of the University of Milan purports to show previously unobserved health effects of the Seveso explosion. The researchers compared 36,000 exposed people to a control group of 180,000. They found that certain cancers were more common among subjects with moderate dioxin exposure than among the controls. Yet they reached no conclusions about the most heavily exposed group, supposedly because the sample size was too small. This claim is suspect. Small sample size in and of itself does not prevent good statistical inference. The curious finding of greater adverse health effects among the moderately exposed people than among the most heavily exposed is more likely due to poor statistical controls for other influences on health, which would cast doubt on the entire study's results.

The evidence concerning DDE, a breakdown product of DDT, is similarly mixed. A widely reported 1993 study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* contended that breast cancer is four times as common in women who have high blood levels of DDE. But a later and much more extensive study by the Kaiser Foundation Research Institute, also published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, found no association between DDE blood levels and breast cancer.

The health effects of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are still controversial. Environmentalist organizations have used the scare over PCBs to help convince the International Joint Commission, a Canadian–U.S. body that resolves disputes along the Great Lakes, to include chlorine in a list of chemicals to be phased out. The Sierra Club has released a report that claims PCB-contaminated fish from the Great Lakes will cause thousands of cancer deaths a year. But PCBs are scarcely new. From the 1940s to the mid 1970s, entire buildings were caulked with PCB-contaminated caulking; PCBs were widely used in bank slips, flexible plastics, fluorescent-light ballasts, air-conditioning systems, and transformers. Researcher James Singmaster III, writing in the February 7 *Chemical and Engineering News*, noted that PCBs have been so prevalent that hundreds

Mr. Bolch, Robert McCallum Professor of Economics at Rhodes College, and Mr. Lyons, professor of chemistry emeritus at Rhodes College, are the authors of Apocalypse Not: Science, Economics, and Environmentalism *(Cato Institute, 1993).*

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of thousands of cancer cases per year attributable to them should already have occurred, if the Sierra Club's warning were valid. The absence of a disastrous cancer epidemic is quite damaging to the case against PCBs.

Another argument against chlorine concerns the trace amount of chloroform produced as a byproduct of the action of chlorine in water—a hazard that is especially great, says the EPA, for those who take hot showers or wash clothes or dishes. Based on experiments with mice, the EPA claims that 1 in 100,000 people who drink water containing over 4.3 parts per billion of chloroform during a lifetime will contract cancer. But this estimate has been severely criticized by toxicology researchers Jeffrey Larson, Douglas Wolf, and Byron Butterworth, whose research was endorsed by *Science* (April 8).

The EPA findings rest on experiments in which tubes were inserted into the mouths of mice and corn oil containing chloroform was shot into their stomachs five times a week for almost two years. When the natural DNA repair system of an animal is overwhelmed by such mistreatment, we should not be surprised that adverse effects are found (in this case, liver tumors). Larson et al., who instead dissolved chloroform in water and allowed mice to drink normally, found no excess tumors—even at levels as high as 1.8 *million* parts per billion, compared with the EPA's danger level of 4.3 parts per billion.

Warning: EPA at Work

THE WAR against chlorine is based largely on a risk that might exist. There is in fact very little evidence that chlorine is doing any appreciable harm to humanity, and it seems to be doing a great deal of good. The research firm Charles River Associates has estimated that the elimination of chlorine and chlorine compounds would impose costs on the American consumer of $91 billion per year, with no guarantee that the substitutes would be any safer. And who will be the guinea pigs? Apparently in response to the EPA's warnings, Peru recently experimented with a drinking-water purification system that did not use chlorine. The result was a cholera epidemic that involved more than 300,000 people and took more than 3,500 lives. The use of proper amounts of chlorine also prevents the spread of such health hazards as the protozoa cryptosporidium, which sickened over a third of a million people in Milwaukee last year.

So the EPA is faced with a truly difficult political issue. If it gives in to the clamor for a chlorine ban, it faces the prospect of creating a public-health hazard of such monumental proportions that the very survival of the agency could be at stake. Aware of this possibility, the EPA has begun to waffle and has even started to question the epidemiological data underpinning the alleged links between cancer and chlorine compounds. The agency's reevaluation of dioxin is expected to be released in mid September, when public meetings on the topic are scheduled to begin. If the EPA has learned from its past missteps, it will say no to the proponents of a chlorine ban. □

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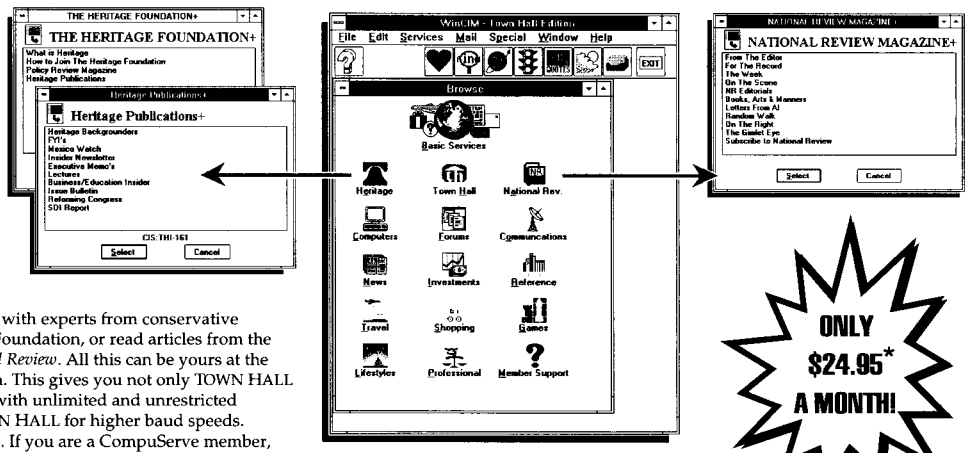

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THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

September 2, 1994

Dear Rusty,

You'll never believe it: I sprained my Achilles' tendon, and I've got my foot in a cast! I was "shooting some hoop," as the kids say, with Little Al, and when I went up for a particularly "gnarly," as the kids say, jumpshot—I landed with my foot all sideways. Yowch, huh?

It didn't hurt at first, but every now and then it flares up. The doctor gave me some medicine—Percocet—that's supposed to stop the pain, and I took a few about twenty minutes ago and so far nothing's happened, which in a way is good because they're very strong painkillers, and every time I take one I get the strangest visions. Yesterday afternoon, driving back from a quick trip in to the office, I could have sworn I saw Strobe Talbott being carried through the city in a sedan chair by Warren Christopher and National Security Advisor Tony Lake. I had to ask my driver to pull over for a moment while I regained my composure.

On the flip side, though, it sure kills the pain in my foot! The only problem is that next week I'm off to Israel, and I need to be in tip-top shape.

The last time I went, I was jet-lagged and groggy, and when I went to visit the Jerusalem synagogue, somebody handed me a small handkerchief-looking round thing, which I realize now I should have put on my head, but at that time all I could think to do was blow my nose in it. Yikes, huh?

This is a good week to be laid up, actually. Bill and HRC are in Martha's Vineyard, and Mr. Panetta seems to have everything humming along at the office, so Tip and I decided to just relax and take it easy for a few days. It's been nice to be at home, especially since school will be starting soon, and I won't have too much time with the kids.

Little Al and I have been spending a lot of "quality time," as the kids say, together. We were sitting outside this morning, tearing newspaper for compost, and he really showed an interest in current events.

"Dad," he asked, "what's Guantanamo Bay?"

"Well," I said, "it's a little bay on the island of Cuba."

"Where's Cuba?"

"Cuba is an island a few miles off the coast of the United States."

"Is that where the President is now?"

I had to laugh. "No," I said, "the President is in Martha's Vineyard, which is an island a few miles off the coast of the United States."

"What's the difference?"

I had to laugh again. "Well," I said, still chuckling, "in the first place, Bill Styron doesn't live in Cuba. But to answer your question, Martha's Vineyard is part of the United States, although some anti-American people live there, whereas Cuba is not part of the United States, and some anti-American people live there, too. Wait a minute. I'm not explaining this right. Let me start over. You see, Cuba is run by a very, very bad man. Well, not actually very, very bad. Let's just say a colorful man. Cuba is run by a kind of bad colorful man. Some people in this country think we should overthrow him with our military."

"Who are those people?"

"Well, Cubans, of course. But you're interrupting me, Al, and Daddy has a rule about that. Okay. Back on track. So, some people—Cubans—think we should overthrow the sort of bad but colorful man. And some think we should open up trade with him."

"Who are those people, Dad?"

"Cigar smokers, mostly. But you forgot Daddy's rule. Okay. Where was I? And still a third group of people think we should do nothing. And a last group of people never thought the bad man was very bad at all since he brought free health care to his country, and they like him and think we should give him money."

"Who are those people, Dad?"

"Well, they're the kind of people who . . . spend the summer in Martha's Vineyard, actually."

"Oh," said Little Al. And then he got quiet, although I knew something was brewing. Suddenly, his face squinched up and he looked confused.

"Dad?" he asked.

"Hmmm?" I said, concentrating on the compost.

"If the man in Cuba is bad, and he gave his country free health care, and all the people who live there want to leave, then why—"

"I know where you're going with this, Albert, and I'm going to stop you right there."

"But—"

"Albert Gore, you stop that this instant!" You have to be firm with kids, Rusty, or they'll never learn. Whoops. The Percocet is kicking in. I'm seeing Dr. Gergen chasing Warren Christopher and Tony Lake around the lawn with a huge axe.

I'd better go. Bye, Rusty.

Your pal, Al

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Parodic Verses

FLORENCE KING

Editor's Note: Miss King has been spending time lately re-reading the work of certain lady novelists. Inspired, she submitted the following.

HILLARIQUE SHRUGGED

After Ayn Rand

BILL CLINTON laughed. He stood naked on a soft muddy hill. It swelled out around him, the body of the hill and the body of the man blending and merging into a triumph of man over nature. He was softer than the hill.

He strode purposefully through the woods, his eyes fixed straight ahead, seeing nothing but the next election. He tried to clamp his lips shut with inflexible contempt but it was hard when you smiled all the time.

He was always striding purposefully. It was why his pasty white body was covered with scars, its soft quivering folds full of scrapes and bruises and half-healed cuts. He was always bumping into things and tripping. That's how he got his distinguishing characteristic. One day while he was striding purposefully, looking neither right nor left, he fell down and landed right on his—

That reminded him. It was time to rape Hillarique. He approached her house and stepped through the French windows into her boudoir.

She was sitting on the bed wearing a long black cape. It made her look more than ever like a witch but it came in handy for purposeful striding, and besides, it covered her legs. Glancing up, she gave him a steely smile.

"Hello, Willie." The two words fell like soft, silken waves of coiffed perfection around the tangled knot of her contempt.

"You ready for some exalted degradation, Hillarique?"

"Put your first principle away, Willie, we've got a problem. You remember that marble statue I threw out the window because I couldn't bear the thought of unworthy people looking at it?"

"You mean your highest rational value? The one you swiped from the Greek battleship last time we were in Europe?"

She gave him a look of blistering contempt. "Yes, that one. Well, it hit Joycelyn Elders on the head, and it did something to her . . . brain. She started talking and couldn't stop. Nobody can shut her up. She's been examining her premises on C-SPAN for the last sixty-three hours."

"Sixty-three hours!" exclaimed Bill with envious contempt. "Why didn't you hit me with it?"

Hillarique strode purposefully across the room, her black cape swirling with Objectivist contempt, and turned on the television. In a moment, they saw General Elders in her admiral's uniform, her jaw set in a rational clamp that made her tin-ear pronunciations sound more peculiar than ever.

"I have come here today to explain the philosophy of Ayn Ryan. My mind is on strike. I am an African-American who does not exist for others. Who is Russ Limbo? The altruist is a second-hander but the egoist won't build Greek columns because he knows you don't have to hold up the roof any more. Ayn Ryan says if you build a building and somebody builds something on top of it—blow it up! I want to hand out contempt kits in the schools. Every chyuld a purposefully striding chy-uld. Who is Russ Limbo?"

As the Surgeon General's voice clattered on, Bill Clinton sank weakly onto the bed and stared down bemusedly at his distinguishing characteristic.

"You know, Hillarique, I'm about all strided out."

Hillarique shrugged. "Who is Rush Limbaugh?" □

Roman Genn

BLUE EYES, BLACK HAIR

After Marguerite Duras

I SIT here with my face in shadow beside the window opening onto the sea. The sea, the sea, inaccessible, turbulent, crashing. The sea, the sea, murmuring always murmuring, the insomniac sea that licks the sand in the stricken, artless calamity of night.

I have blue eyes and black hair and I am running a temperature in a teapot from trying to cure a homosexual. It all started in a café by the sea, the sea, after the beauty of the day had vanished as abruptly as whisky in a book reviewer's glass.

I was sitting with a Jewish Prince from Vancouver who also has blue eyes and black hair. While we were swapping migraine stories at our table by the sea, the sea, the homosexual came in with kohl on his eyes. The prince left and the homosexual started weeping. He was alone and attractive and worn out from watching yachts on the sea, the sea, glide past his body like an infinite caress, so I asked him if he wished he were dead and he said yes.

He sat down and we wept a while, then he made me a proposition. Because I looked so much like the Jewish Prince with blue eyes and black hair, he asked me if I would

St. Martin's will publish The Florence King Reader, *an anthology, early next year.*

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move into his room and lie naked on the floor with a black veil over my face and talk about what it's like to be tired and cold and despairing by the sea, the sea. I had nothing better to do, so off we went to our zipless *Weltschmerz*.

The room was empty except for wall-to-wall sheets. Our relationship was your average existential crisis by the sea, the sea; I slept, he wept, then we switched.

"I must tell you," he said, "it's as if you were responsible for the thing inside you, that you know nothing of and that terrifies me because it seizes other things and changes them within itself without seeming to."

"It's true I'm responsible for the astral nature of my sex," I replied, "its lunar, bloody rhythm. In relation to you as to the sea."

Most of the time he walked around and around my supine body and then shrank back against the wall and wept. I got to like the idea of being repulsive when I realized how much it was adding to my sense of hopeless torment. Still, I have to admit that I got a little restless lying on the floor all day long, talking about being stricken and knowledgeless beside the sea, the sea, so one day I went out and picked up a man.

When I got back, the homosexual wanted to hear all about it, personal things like "his name, his pleasure, his skin, his member, his mouth, his cries."

That's when I started to worry. Let me tell you, when you're locked in a room with someone who calls a penis a "member," you've sunk about as low as you can get. □

Morning in Book Camp

Provoked by Joan Didion

WELCOME TO Camp Jejune. The Sublimes are lookin' for a few good novels and I got one right here. *Play It As It Lays*, by Joan Didion.

I bet you denouement-diddlers never read it, did you? Yeah, that's what I thought. You look like the kind of blurbheads that wouldn't know an elegiac spiritual wasteland if it jumped up and bit you. Well, that's gonna change 'cause you're in Book Camp now.

Play It As It Lays is about a girl named Maria Wyeth whose hometown in Nevada has been turned into a missile range. What's that a symbol of? Lemme hear it loud and clear!

SIR! THE ARID LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUL, SIR!

Correct! Now, if there's one thing the Sublime Corps won't tolerate, it's the kind of reader who likes a novel to start out good and puts it down if it don't. If I catch you plot-suckers doin' it, I'll turn you into a slice of life quicker'n you can say "exposition." Here's how *Play It As It Lays* starts out:

"I never ask about snakes. Why should Shalimar attract kraits. Why should a coral snake need two glands of neurotoxic poison to survive while a king snake, *so similarly marked*, needs none. Where is the Darwinian logic there. You might ask that. I never would, not any more."

All right, story-ballers, whadda we got here?

SIR! NIHILISM, SIR!

Correct! Nihilism. Nada. Nothin'. That's what this whole book is about. That's how you separate Sublimes from civilians—nothin' matters to a Sublime but we'll tell you all about it anyway. It's like the Sublime Corps Manual says: You gotta read Proust when you have a fever and Joan Didion while you're havin' a miscarriage.

Now back to Maria Wyeth. Her husband's a movie maker. When he stars her in a movie about a girl who gets gangraped by 12 motorcycle guys, she keeps goin' back to see it over and over again. You know why she likes it so much? Because "the girl on the screen seemed to have a definite knack for controlling her own destiny." Whadda we got? Lemme hear it loud and clear!

SIR! EXISTENTIAL CHAOS, SIR!

She starred in another movie where her husband just followed her around New York and shot film: "The picture showed Maria doing a fashion sitting, Maria asleep on a couch at a party. Maria on the telephone arguing with the billing department at Bloomingdale's, Maria cleaning some marijuana with a kitchen strainer, Maria crying on the subway. At the end she was thrown into negative so she would look dead."

All right, Aristotle freaks, whadda you call that?

SIR! ANOMIE, SIR!

You bet your *ibids* it's anomie! It's like her husband says: "Maria has difficulty talking to people with whom she is not sleeping." She's not what civilians call an outgoin' gal. Her and her husband go to this party where she curls up in a ball until he happens to say that he likes to eat breakfast out. Then she comes to and says, real low and to nobody in particular: "In fact he doesn't always get breakfast out. In fact the last time he got breakfast out was on April 17."

All right, McMuffdivers, tell me what her problem is!

SIR! ALIENATION, SIR!

When you study the Sublime Corps Manual I want you to pay special attention to what the Lit Crits say about Joan Didion's technique. Here's what General Guy "Blood and Guts" Davenport wrote: "She has given the novel a pace so violent and so powerful that its speed becomes the dominant symbol of her story."

Let's see about that. Listen to this:

> Maria drove the freeway . . . it was essential (to pause was to throw herself into unspeakable peril) that she be on the freeway by ten o'clock. Not somewhere on Hollywood Boulevard, not on her way to the freeway, but actually on the freeway. If she was not she lost the day's rhythm. . . . an intricate stretch just south of the interchange . . . required a diagonal move across four lanes of traffic. On this afternoon she finally did it without once braking or once losing the beat on the radio . . . she was exhilarated, and that night she slept dreamlessly. . . . So that she would not have to stop for food she kept a hard-boiled egg on the passenger seat of the Corvette. She could shell and eat a hard-boiled egg at seventy miles an hour (crack it on the steering wheel, never mind salt, salt bloats, no matter what happened she remembered her body). . . .

All right, lube jobs, whadda the Crits call that?

SIR! VOYAGE OF SELF-DISCOVERY, SIR!

Now, lemme tell you about Joan Didion's vision. If anybody drives that much on the L.A. freeways they're gonna run into a lot of smog. That's why Maria's out there, so she can see things without a lot of sharp edges. If Sublimes find a clean window, we blow our breath on it so we can show off our exquisite sensibility. Opaque is where it's at! Heat must shimmer! You gotta have haze! You gotta have refraction! You gotta glimpse everything intermittently through squinted eyes! Squint, you lousy potboilers! *Squint!* Now tell me what you see!

SIR! AMBIGUITIES, SIR!

The Sublime Corps has racked up a lot of tributes to Joan Didion, but this one is engraved on the statue of us plantin'

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the flag on Pointless View that stands at the main gate of Camp Jejune. It's from Lore Segal's *New York Times* review of *Play It As It Lays*: "Her prose tends to posture like a figure from a decadent period of art, whose fingers curl toward an exposed heart or a draped bosom swelling with suspect emotion."

Whadda you print lice call that?

SIR! NEGATIVE CAPABILITY, SIR!

Correct! Now, *Semper Vortex*, as Sublimes say. Maria Wyeth turns up again in another Joan Didion novel called *A Book of Common Prayer*, only this time her name is Charlotte Douglas. After her daughter gets mixed up with terrorists and disappears, Charlotte goes to a Caribbean island named Boca Grande and waits there for the kid to turn up because Boca Grande is "the very cervix of the world, the place through which a child lost to history must eventually pass."

All right, wit-holes, whadda the Sublimes call that?

SIR! METAPHOR, SIR!

There's another woman on Boca Grande who spends her nights waitin' for her generator to break down so she can recite Matthew Arnold in the dark, so naturally she's impressed by Charlotte's energy. You wanna know about Charlotte's energy? Listen to this:

> I once saw her make the necessary incision in the trachea of an OAS field worker who was choking on a piece of steak at the Jockey Club. A doctor had been called but the OAS man was turning blue. Charlotte did it with a boning knife plunged first in a vat of boiling rice. A few nights later the OAS man caused a scene because Charlotte refused to fellate him on the Caribe terrace, but that, although suggestive of the ambiguous signals Charlotte tended to transmit, is neither here nor there.

Civilians would call that a shaggy-dog story but Sublimes have a different name for it. Lemme hear it!

SIR! ILLUMINATING THE HUMAN CONDITION, SIR!

After that Charlotte spends every day sittin' at the airport havin' hot flashbacks until a revolution closes the airport down and she has to find another place to be a symbol of futility in. Life on Boca Grande gets worse: "The bite of one fly deposits an egg which in its pupal stage causes human flesh to suppurate. The bite of another deposits a larval worm which three years later

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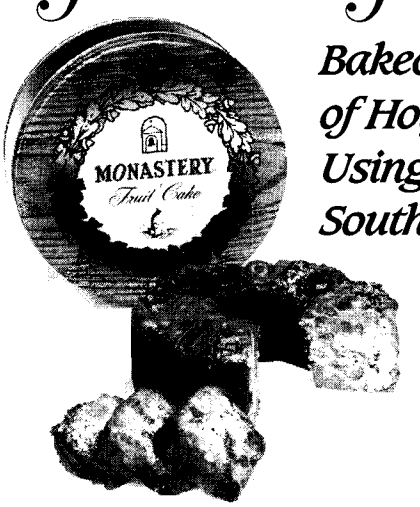

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surfaces on and roams the human eyeball." That's just like Camp Jejune in August—good Sublimes like Joan Didion never forget their Book Camp days.

Finally Charlotte is shot dead in the Boca Grande birth-control clinic while she's handin' out rubbers, and her body is shipped back to the States with a red, white, and blue T-shirt draped on the coffin because nobody could find a flag—

Just a minute! I saw that smirk! All right, you cheek-tonguer, you asked for it. You're gonna do fifty *op cits* up Hostile Universe Hill before breakfast! That'll learn you to stop lookin' for a laugh in a Sublime book! And just in case any of the rest of you get any ideas, let's go through the drill:

What did Joan Didion say when they asked who's on first?

SIR! I KNOW ABOUT FIRST, SIR!

Who's on first?

SIR! I NEVER ASK ABOUT FIRST, SIR!

Who's on first?

SIR! OTHER PEOPLE ASK THAT BUT I DON'T, SIR!

That's better! Now back to *A Book of Common Prayer*. Joan Didion never gets around to explainin' why Charlotte thought Boca Grande was the cervix of the world, so we gotta turn to the *Sublime Corps Manual* to get a straight answer from the Crits. Here's what Mark Royden "Wild Man" Winchell said: "If it is not altogether clear why Charlotte has come to Boca Grande, it is even less clear why she stays. At one level her insistence on remaining may simply be another indication of her solipsistic innocence."

Well, bookfans, what do you say to that?

SIR! ON AN OPAQUE DAY YOU CAN SEE FOREVER, SIR!

Now listen to me, because I'm only gonna say this once. There's a certain Crit that Sublimes are sworn to hate, and if I catch you readin' him, I'll cut off your classical unities and eat 'em for breakfast. His name is John Simon and this is what he said about Joan Didion: "After reading such outpourings of hypersensitivity in quotidian conflict, one feels positively relieved to be an insensitive clod."

That's a civilian for you. Now, while you're marchin' to the mess hall for breakfast, I wanna hear the Sublime Corps Hymn loud and clear. Column right, har! Forward, har!

From the halls of ambiguity
To the shores of psychic void,
We secured the arid landscape—
Every sentence was destroyed!
Just to fragment every story line,
And to drop anomic bombs,
We'll obsess through suppurating climes
Until every Crit succumbs! □

Decline of the Best

FREDERICK TURNER

EVERYBODY knows those last fatalistic lines of Arnold's "Dover Beach":

And we are here as on a
darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms
of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash
by night.

Yale's useful new edition of *Culture and Anarchy* is an excellent way of exploring discursively this poetic insight, which many observers find prophetic of our present-day cultural predicament.

Arnold's basic aim is to defend high culture as useful to society. He argues that it is the excellence of the citizens rather than the representativeness of their government that is essential to a healthy society and true progress. In the light of the then-recent Reform Bill, which extended the franchise to a much wider section of the British population, he writes that the chief law of democracy is the permission it gives to "do as one likes"—that is, to follow the impulses of one's ordinary self, not one's best self. He rejects the argument that democratic institutions themselves tend to enlighten and educate—rather, they corrupt, by giving free rein to the aristocratic tendency toward unintellectual high-spirited barbarity, the middle-class tendency toward materialistic narrow-minded philistinism, and the lower-class tendency toward violence, sentiment, prejudice, and drink. The anarchy spawned by "doing as one likes" expresses itself in the darkling plain of willful dissent, religious and ethnic intolerance, spiritual emptiness, greed, intellectual relativism, and riot.

Culture and Anarchy, by Matthew Arnold, edited by Samuel Lipman with commentary by Maurice Cowling, Gerald Graff, Samuel Lipman, and Steven Marcus (Yale, 289 pp., $30)

Accepting democracy as inevitable, and indeed necessary in the long run, Arnold brings culture to the rescue. What is culture? He describes it as a blending of the Hebraic impulse toward moral perfection and right action with the Hellenistic impulse toward clarity of thought and right reason. True culture blends sweetness (beauty and subtle decorum) with light (critical reflection). The cultured person, liberated from the self-deceptions of the flesh and the indolence of the aesthetic by the Hebraic element, and released from the "machinery" of economic interest and political power by the Hellenistic element, follows only reason and the will of God. Cultivated people manage to escape and become alienated from their inherited class and ethnic limitations into a wider, more humane universality, by means of some combination of natural potential and education. The health of a society depends on increasing by education the numbers of the cultured.

What kind of education should this be? In *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold reiterates his belief that the "best that is known and thought in the world" is recognizable as such to a cultured person, and if properly presented to any human being has the power to transform him into an arbiter of goodness, truth, and beauty in his own right. Looking toward the example of French and German education, Arnold demands that the state establish an educational system that will pass on the sacred flame. He calls upon the

Mr. Turner, a poet and critic, is Founders Professor of Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas. His forthcoming book, The Culture of Hope, *will be published by the Free Press this fall.*

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Anglican Church to give up the remnants of its dogmatic and local religious entanglements, and to become the unifying moral guide of this educational renaissance.

There is much in Arnold's essay that is relevant to our current situation in America, or so it appears to the commentators in this volume—with the exception of Maurice Cowling. Mr. Cowling argues that *Culture and Anarchy* is too deeply rooted in its local historical conditions to apply to us, and that its politics cannot be detached from a religious argument that is now irrelevant. Further, he warns conservatives that Arnold's own concept of religion is so latitudinarian and cut off from historical traditions of worship that it cannot be used as a unifying source of social authority.

A lively debate rages, however, between the liberal pluralist Gerald Graff and the more conservative Steven Marcus and Samuel Lipman.

Marcus and Lipman argue in different ways but from similar standpoints that we have anarchy, that we need a common culture, and that Arnold's vision of culture should be an inspiration. But though neither has given up the struggle, both seem to despair about our cultural prospects. Both agree that Arnold's faith in the state as the final guarantor of an excellent education was fatally misplaced. Both believe that cultural education in America is almost irreparable. Both seem to dismiss Arnold's strange ecumenical, ethical, evolutionary, and historical version of religion as not having the backbone to attract the allegiance of any but intellectuals. Both concede the circularity of Arnold's notion that the best cultural artifacts are made and recognized only by the best appreciators of them, and the best appreciators become so by contemplating the best artifacts. Though one can agree with almost everything both Mr. Marcus and Mr. Lipman say, we are left with a sort of invitation to read Arnold in a spirit of melancholy appreciation for a style that is dying, and as a diagnostician of our inevitable doom. What, then, of Mr. Graff?

He implies that Arnold was an elitist confined to a Eurocentric canon, and dismisses him as a retrograde influence in the modern academy. Rejecting the proposition that a common culture is essential, Mr. Graff denies that there is a legitimate way of distin-

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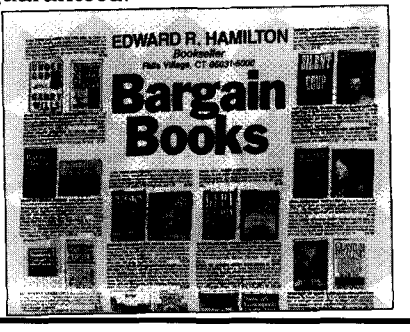

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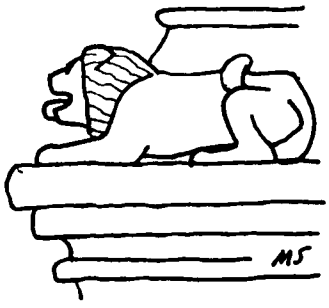
guishing the "best that is known and thought," and argues for a United States essentially without a single cultural identity or a common unquestioned and unconscious background of beliefs. He praises the new challenges to a traditional idea of universality posed by feminism, multiculturalism, and gay studies. Nevertheless he does not believe that their challenge is the same as an attack on reason, and he advocates, instead of a common culture, a common debate.



I find a few things to agree with in Mr. Graff's commentary. I am glad that unlike many of his allies on the Left he is not prepared to abandon reason. But if he does not, his whole position unravels. Reasoning must be conducted in some kind of shared language, and language, as the artificial-intelligence pioneers found out to their dismay, is not an abstract mechanism: it requires a massive shared database and an extensive set of shared assumptions about the world. Moreover, Mr. Graff seems to be advocating a conversation or debate that makes no attempt to establish a shared truth: but such a language surely could not contain questions, propositions, and the verb "to be," which imply the possibility of truth and fact, and a wide range of grammatical constructions, including substantives, which imply that there might be a more or less coherent agreed meaning for a word.

Pluralism is fundamentally incoherent in that it does not include its own propositions in the plurality of positions among which it refuses to establish priority. Until some positions are legitimately subsumed into others, a provisional pluralism is a good place to start a discussion; but this discussion already began some thousands of years ago. In the context of Bosnia and Rwanda it is either irresponsible or racist to suggest, as he does, that "Americans can . . . learn to differ fundamentally with one another without always being on the brink of violence." Perhaps Graff would argue that we are protected by a Constitution guaranteeing our rights; but so, in theory, were the citizens of the old Soviet Union and the satellite countries. As both Lipman and Marcus point out, it is civil society and a common culture which guarantee that a Constitution will be adhered to.

One can agree with Graff that we should not accept the essentially Romantic position that fundamental assumptions must be unconscious. But almost all human beings—with the possible exception of a few Western academics—share a huge stock of *conscious* assumptions. Reflection upon our assumptions is not the same as destructive criticism of them. It is this wise reflection, often encouraged by sacred ritual, that both endears a culture to itself, and makes it translatable into the poetic or sacred language of another culture. Mr. Graff is quite wrong in equating the real differences among traditional cultures, rooted in those common assumptions, with the arid "narcissism of small differences" to be found in academic controversy, or with the cookie-cutter sameness and mutual hatred of ethnic, gender, or sexual-choice advocacy groups, which share one overwhelming value: the maximization of their portion of the federal budget.

Real traditional cultures can and do converse with one another in many ways—the Olympics, art, crafts, trade, myth, science, literature. Arnold's formulation of the "best" can surely be expanded, without violating its spirit, to include the classical essence of Benares, Peking, Kyoto, Chichen Itza, and Benin. Each of those civilizations no doubt had to contend with its newcomers, malcontents, and genuinely oppressed minorities; but it is a mistake to equate cultural deprivation with cultural difference.

Arnold shares with all four of his commentators a deep common assumption: that culture, the realm of choice, consciousness, and freedom, is distinct from nature, the realm of deterministic and unreasoning cause and effect. But this "fact–value" split makes nature unavailable as a guide or test, cutting culture adrift to be defined by whatever group—licensed victualers, barbers, transsexuals, Hoosiers, fundamentalists, motorcyclists—wants the fading cachet of the old word. Thus Arnold can only gesture toward touchstones of literary quality, touchstones whose beauty is quite unapparent to the literature professor Gerald Graff, according to his own cheerful admission. (Perhaps there are new opportunities for tone-deaf symphony conductors and color-blind art teachers.)

These reflections prompt one to speculate that we may all be missing an opportunity that is staring us in the face. Science itself has outgrown the mechanistic determinism of the nineteenth century, and it is now no threat to human freedom to seek the roots of human values in the optimal conditions of oral cultures, healthy neural development, primate social behavior, mammalian infant care, biodiversity, and complex self-organizing physical systems. There is nothing sacred or necessary about the fact–value distinction. Just as the economics of human nature supplied such thinkers as Hobbes, Locke, and the framers of our Constitution with a basis for inalienable human rights, perhaps good cross-cultural research in neuroscience, infant development, anthropology, folklore, and environmental science can provide us with at least a basis for deciding what kinds of art, literature, religious imagery, and so on are likely to shape a creative, moral, and intelligent population. If we are willing to give up the distinction between nature and culture, sweetness and light may be possible after all. □

Some Dare Call It Charity

MARVIN OLASKY

WHEN Cicero a half-century before Christ tried to resuscitate the dying Roman Republic, he criticized the prodigal philanthropy of politicians who curried favor by distributing food and staging gladiatorial contests. Contributing one's own effort and courage, he argued, was morally superior to contributing money.

Cicero's observation is one of the nuggets to be mined from *Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History*, an overview of attitudes toward char-

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ity over the past three millennia. Although *Giving* is full of fool's gold that author Robert Bremner fails to distinguish from the real thing, almost every chapter contains a quotation or two useful for conservatives bashed by the media for lacking compassion toward the homeless.

For example, St. Basil the Great (329–379), who lived in what is now Turkey, founded a shelter for needy neighbors and travelers—and also pointed out that a person who gives money to every wanderer "casts it to a dog, that is troublesome on account of his shamelessness, but not pitiable because of his need." The Jewish scholar Maimonides (1135–1204) similarly proposed caution: "One should not contribute to a charity fund unless one knows that the man in charge of the collection is trustworthy and intelligent and knows how to manage properly." Martin Luther noted, "There is no business in which so much knavery and deceit are practiced as in beggary," and Luther's contemporary Juan Luis Vives, a Spanish humanist living in England, wrote that alcoholics or those who lived dissolutely "must not die of hunger" but should feel its pangs. Daniel Defoe, 15 years before he wrote about the self-reliant Robinson Crusoe, argued in his pamphlet *Giving Alms No Charity* (1704) that governmental anti-poverty programs then being proposed would not be truly charitable but would instead relieve that poverty caused by "luxury, sloth, and pride."

I've seen through my own research that many people are "charitable" for selfish reasons; Mr. Bremner provides early examples. Ancient Greeks criticized begging but worried that, if they did not give, a beggar might reveal himself to be an angry god in disguise. The Koran ordered, "Spend in charity for your own good," and a British poet four centuries ago, Robert Crowley, detailed the scams of two beggars but advised giving nevertheless: "Though the beggars be wicked, thou shall have thy reward." Those less interested in their own reward would help able-bodied beggars to reform. Nathaniel Hawthorne, however, practiced selfish charity: he called beggars he encountered in Liverpool "rats that nibble at the honest bread and cheese of the community," but he slipped coins to them anyway because "the good to ourselves, resulting from a kind act, is worth more than the trifle by which we purchase it."

What Mr. Bremner's quotations illuminate is the debate throughout history between those who say, "Love your neighbor as yourself," and those who say, "Love yourself by giving coins to your neighbor." He does not challenge the feel-good charity that is prevalent today; but another new book, *Giving for Social Change*, does. Authors Althea Nagai, Robert Lerner, and Stanley Rothman stress the results of giving. They state flatly: "Charity means helping the poor," and then show that most recent foundation giving does not help the poor and thus should be seen as thumb-sucking, not benevolence.

Many conservatives see foundations as citadels of liberalism. That is objectively true, as *Giving for Social Change* shows, because foundations give liberal public-policy projects four times as much as they give conservative projects or groups. Subjectively, however, the story is different: when asked to rate themselves on an ideological scale, 42 per cent of the foundation trustees and officers surveyed labeled themselves as ideologically conservative, 37 per cent as liberal, and 21 per cent as moderate.

Such bi-polarism is unusual. Most elite groups swing toward either the Right or the Left: three out of four military leaders call themselves conservative, nine out of ten public-interest leaders call themselves liberal. But it is sad to see that foundation conservatives do not put their money where their mouths are. Miss Nagai, Mr. Lerner, and Mr. Rothman show that liberals fund liberals but conservatives

Giving: Charity and Philanthropy in History, by Robert H. Bremner (Transaction, 235 pp., $34.95)

Giving for Social Change: Foundations, Public Policy, and the American Political Agenda, by Althea K. Nagai, Robert Lerner, and Stanley Rothman (Praeger, 218 pp., $55)

Unhealthy Charities: Hazardous to Your Health and Wealth, by James T. Bennett and Thomas J. DiLorenzo (Basic, 269 pp., $25)

Mr. Olasky is editor-at-large of World *magazine and the author of* The Tragedy of American Compassion.

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largely fund moderates: as the authors put it, "Conservative foundations disburse most of their community and urban-affairs grants to neutral organizations."

Several reasons for conservative wimpishness stand out. First, many conservatives are merely traditionalists, espousing "a conservatism of sentiment, not of belief." *Giving for Social Change* points out that "conservatives are not in favor of increasing social change spending, but only a few conservative respondents actively favor cutting most social change programs. Most think programs should remain at current levels of support."

Second, except at the ideologically conservative foundations that knowingly support the Right's projects, liberal staffs dominate: "Liberalism and reliance on professional staff institutionally go together." Overall, the lesson from foundations seems similar to the one we've learned from watching Supreme Court appointees: ideologically in-your-face conservatives stay conservative; traditionalist conservatives become "moderate."

Giving for Social Change at times descends into academic turgidity, but its stress on objective results is nevertheless valuable. That same emphasis is apparent in *Unhealthy Charities*, which doggedly compares the "self-professed good intentions" of three big health charities—the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association—with their sickly results.

James Bennett and Thomas DiLorenzo show that the "public education" efforts of these organizations are "little more than thinly disguised fund-raising activity." They show how the organizations, which call themselves volunteer-oriented, spend 34 to 43 cents of each dollar on compensation, sometimes large: in 1992 the American Heart Association paid its executive vice-president $246,000, plus $39,000 in benefits. They point out that the organizations now use big chunks of cash not for charity but to lobby the Federal Government.

Unhealthy Charities vigorously emphasizes a frequent lack of charity: "the American Heart Association spends nothing on patient services . . . the American Lung Association allocates less than 1 per cent of its annual income to providing direct aid to lung-disease patients—despite fund-raising rhetoric suggesting otherwise." The miracles these organizations perform seem to consist largely of inflating the importance of their works at health fairs attended by captive high-school audiences. (Jesus turned five loaves and two fish into food for 5,000; the American Cancer Society turns the handing of brochures to eight students into the education of 2,500.)

Unhealthy Charities concludes with a prescription: "Let the sunshine in." Messrs. Bennett and DiLorenzo note that "Typically, any organization considered 'charitable' is viewed almost as a sacred cow largely immune from careful scrutiny by researchers, the media, and the public." Clearly, newspapers and magazines should have charity reporters who investigate, instead of merely recycling public-relations handouts.

But will that solve the problem? Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of poor individuals who were unwilling to sober up and work: "They wish to be saved from the mischief of their vices, but not from their vices." These books strongly suggest that many of those with the capacity to give cannot distinguish between virtue and vice, and so spread mischief wherever they go. □

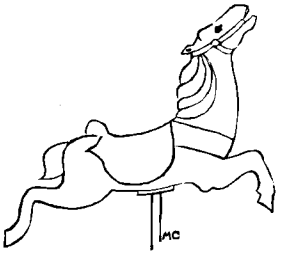
A World Made in English

DAVID MARTIN

The New World of the Gothic Fox: Culture and Economy in English and Spanish America, by Claudio Véliz (California, 267 pp., $35)

THREE and a half centuries ago, the English-speaking settlers of the New World clung to the scraggy margins of the American Northeast while the Spaniards explored everywhere, creating an imposing civilization from Santiago to California. But by the end of the nineteenth century, the balance of power and wealth had been decisively reversed and since then the situation has hardly changed at all. There is a world of difference between El Paso and Tijuana. Claudio Véliz sets out to show why.

His argument is that the Spanish and British have been the two really serious empires of recent centuries, at least in terms of what they left behind. What remains of the former is a continent dotted with a multitude of magnificent churches and plazas, while what remains of the latter is a world language and a multitude of signifiers deriving from the Industrial Revolution and pluralism. These signifiers have proved attractive far beyond the bounds of English-speaking settlement.



What is crucial is adaptability and the capacity to devise what other people want. With a nice sense of provocation, Mr. Véliz claims that whatever their differences, all the English-speaking countries "are islands off the coast of Kent; the cliffs of Dover can be seen as clearly from Cincinnati as from Edmonton, Wellington, and Ballarat." He then says that these various English-speaking countries share more with one another than any of them shares with any other cultural tradition and goes on to specify what the shared traits are.

English speakers dislike regulation from the center and bureaucracy in general; they enjoy volunteering; they are passionate about nature and pseudo-rural suburbs; they are enthusiasts for every variety of hobby from gardening to bush trekking, from cat fancying to bird watching. A summary focus of all this would be the Common Law tradition and the fact that the English language is unregulated by any regal academy. The Hispanic world with its centralized tradition of Civil Law and its Spanish Academy is something completely different. To these summary differences must be added voluntarism

Mr. Martin is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. His most recent book, Tongues of Fire, *concerned the recent expansion of evangelical Protestantism in Latin America.*

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versus inclusiveness in religion and fragmented oligarchy versus monarchical absolutism.

Mr. Véliz expounds two corollaries of his thesis: the supreme importance of language as the stream that bears along the various signifiers, and the importance of where these signifiers originated. The second of these is not going to be popular, and he will need all the adventitious gain of being a Chilean to avoid ending up an academic Saint Sebastian. It is simply not done to celebrate white European origins, to suppose that empires weave the web of vast civilizations, to assume that civilizations are such a web, or to use the word "civilization" with unabashed aplomb. Above all, Mr. Véliz commits a crime of first-degree political incorrectness by blaming the condition of Latin America largely on its culture rather than on North American economic predation.

But, as John Donne said of sin, "I have more." Not only is Véliz one of those cosmopolitan polyglots who exploit a boundless confidence in the rhetorical possibilities of standard English, but he does so to celebrate the infinite variety of the demotic. As for all his references to Mâle, Panofsky, Wölfflin, and the rest, they decorate the proposition that however well based a cultural superiority may be it avails you nothing in the marketplace. Unamuno can stay high on his plinth while the vulgar English-speakers go about devising what others want—from soccer to tourism, from rock music to the VCR and McDonald's.

I predict that ill-natured reviewers will pretend not to understand Véliz's use of metaphor, in spite of his careful deflections and erudite footnotes. He makes effective use of Isaiah Berlin's distinction between the hedgehogs, who know one thing, and the foxes, who know many, assigning the former role to the Spanish-speakers and the latter to the English-speakers. But then Mr. Véliz is seduced by the idea of using the Baroque, especially the figure of the unified, all-encompassing dome, as an architectural metaphor of the Counter-Reformation. So far, fairly good, because he is able to argue—just a little bit inconsistently—that whatever the Italian *origins* of the Baroque, much of the essential energy of the Counter-Reformation was provided by the Spanish, especially the Jesuits.

But the double metaphor of a Ba-

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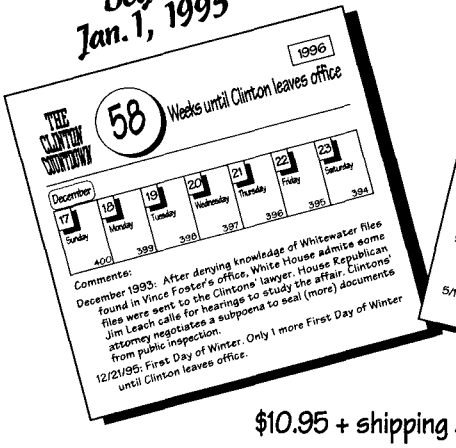

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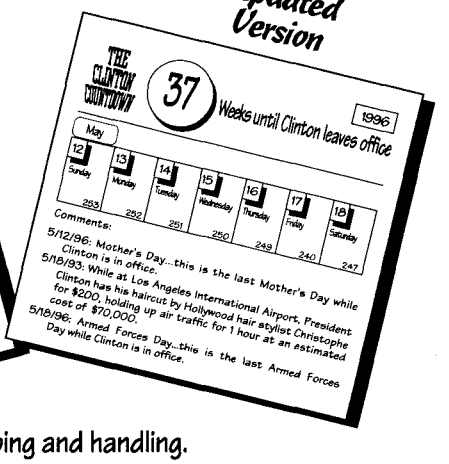

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roque hedgehog now requires a duplex alternative: the Gothic fox. This allows the reader to indulge any number of art-historical objections when what Mr. Véliz really has in mind is a *cultural* translation of Pevsner's comments on the additive, dispersed quality of English late Gothic, and Ruskin's meditations on the moral implications of the Gothic: individuality, changeability, nonchalance, unorganized redundancy, delight in the ludicrous, and so on. To this Véliz adds a contrast between an English Romantic delight in nature and the haughty urbanity of the Hispanic Baroque. By this time I suspect the Baroque hedgehog may still be safely immobile but the Gothic fox will be pursued by a critical hue and cry. Yes, there is an astonishing Romantic attachment to the Gothic and to nature in Anglo-American civilization, but the ill-natured critic is bound to ask about "Gothic" Romanticism in Germany and Palladian classicism in Anglo-America.

Mr. Véliz's other rhetorical device turns on a comparison between the way the demise of Athens inaugurated the spread of Hellenism and the parallel fate of the British empire. In an article in *Quadrant* called "A World Made in England," Mr. Véliz enumerated an astounding inventory of artifacts and institutions devised in the time of Britain's imperial greatness and the Industrial Revolution and still traveling around the human universe: Scouts, soccer, the concept of sport, photography, television, the YMCA, and so on. But he knows perfectly well that the U.S. is not just an efficient distributor of British signifiers, so in this book we are supplied with an equally astonishing inventory of American signifiers under the rubric, "A World Made in *English*." The correction is appropriate.

Behind this brilliant, audacious book lies a love affair between a distinguished representative of Chile, safely locked behind its mountain chain, and Britain, bound in by its sea. Mr. Véliz has lived in Boston, London, and Melbourne and loves all three. He is willing to celebrate them in terms that would be unbecoming from a native. True, the darker side of English-speaking culture is notably absent here. But given the present torrent of self-denigration and guilt, a praise-song from elsewhere may not be amiss. □

Soul Food

ROBERT P. GEORGE

THE CENTRAL pre-liberal tradition of thought about personal and political morality understood the human body as part of the *personal* reality of the human being. Persons were not considered to be *merely* bodies, but their bodies were understood to be as much a part of them as were their minds and spirits. The "person" was understood as a dynamic *unity* of body, mind, and spirit.

Belief in the unity of the human being contrasts with the modern idea of humans as nonbodily persons inhabiting subpersonal (i.e., *merely* material) bodies. According to this idea, the body is a mere instrument of the person whose body it is. It is not difficult to see how the adoption of this person/body dualism underwrites contemporary liberalism's rejection of traditional moral norms against nonmarital sexual acts, abortion, and euthanasia.

This splendid new book by Leon Kass, a physician and professor on the Committee for Social Thought of the University of Chicago, attacks the "corporealism" and dualism characteristic not only of contemporary liberalism, but also (as he demonstrated in his equally splendid *Toward a More Natural Science*) of much modern science. *The Hungry Soul* is not, however, about the morality of sex or killing; it is about the morality of eating.

The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature, by Leon R. Kass, MD (Free Press, 248 pp., $24.95)

Of course, compared to sexual morality and the morality of killing, the morality of eating is hardly controversial. More or less everybody agrees that it is wrong to eat other people and not wrong to eat fruits, nuts, and vegetables. The eating of meat and other animal products generates a measure of controversy, but vegetarianism is not (yet) one of the central issues in our culture war.

Nevertheless, as Dr. Kass shows, what we eat, and the way we eat, have profound implications for our self-understanding. And he explores these with a view to discovering (or re-discovering) important truths about human nature, the human condition, and the human good. His conclusions undermine the modern dualistic self-understanding and clear the ground for the reassertion of the older view: "Everything that is ours due to our animality is nevertheless different in us . . . precisely because we are not merely or simply animals."

Like lesser beings, humans must feed in order to sustain our lives. Thus, we share in what Dr. Kass calls "the great paradox of life," namely, that "in eating, each living form homogenizes other forms and denies other life, appropriating them solely for its own use and purposes." Still, though we have no choice about whether to consume, we do choose what to consume and how to consume it. In this apparently merely "animal" dimension of our lives, then, we have an opportunity to "perfect our nature" by choosing wisely. It is given to us not merely to feed, but to feed intelligently, i.e., to eat; and even to eat in a manner that is uniquely dignified, gracious, and ennobling, i.e., to dine.

Dr. Kass reaches his conclusions the old-fashioned way: he reasons to them. He brings to bear a rare combination of scientific knowledge and humanistic learning, and his arguments are rigorous, his scholarship meticulous. In defiance of the relativism and multiculturalist sensitivities of the contemporary academy, he does not shrink from stating boldly that, for example, cannibalism is bad, not because most people find it disgusting, but because it "embodies, in principle, a false view of human life."

Even where one ultimately is left unpersuaded by his arguments—as I was, for example, by his strictures against "even seemingly innocent public eating and drinking" which, he maintains, "can violate tacit social relations"—one cannot help being impressed by the au-

Mr. George is a legal philosopher at Princeton and a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He is the author of Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality *(Oxford).*

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thor's moral seriousness and sheer thoughtfulness. Dr. Kass's defense of his refusal to allow students to eat or drink in his classes will at least make me stop to *think* before I next take a cup of coffee into the seminar room.

The Hungry Soul defies dominant academic ideologies in a particularly subversive way. Its defense of traditional understandings against modern orthodoxies takes the form not of a direct philosophical refutation, but rather of a practical undermining. By reasoning his way to sound conclusions, Dr. Kass demonstrates, against contemporary skepticism, the truth-attaining power of reason. By demonstrating the inferiority of some practices to others, he establishes, against cultural relativism, the determinateness of important aspects of human nature and, thus, the human good.

Nowhere is the potential subversiveness of Dr. Kass's achievement clearer than in the brilliant final chapter of *The Hungry Soul*, entitled "Sanctified Eating: A Memorial of Creation." Here, in considering the significance of Jewish dietary laws, Dr. Kass argues that the central truths about the embodied, but more than merely bodily, human being that are conveyed in the Bible "do *not* rest on Biblical authority."

> *Reading* Genesis 1 demonstrates the truth of its claims about the superior ontological standing of the human. This is not anthropocentric prejudice but cosmological truth. And nothing we shall ever learn about *how* we came to be this way will ever make it false.

In Leon Kass we have a first-rate philosopher and man of science who reads the Bible and finds in it cosmological truth! The Guardians of the academic Republic had better bring in the thought police. □

FILM

Clear and Muddled Danger

JOHN SIMON

RARE is the thriller that can be pronounced even near-impeccable. Almost always the tricky genre entails unnegotiated pitfalls. Sometimes gadgetry and special effects drown out human interest. At other times the plot is so contrived and over-elaborate as to make no sense and preclude comprehension. At still other times excessive violence and gratuitous sex smack distastefully of indulging the great unwashed. ***Clear and Present Danger*** smartly and elegantly avoids all these traps, even as it encompasses the spy movie, the political action thriller, and the jungle warfare film. It is as good as the genre allows: a masterpiece of minor art.

Like its fine but less dazzling predecessor, *Patriot Games*, it is based on an overlong Tom Clancy novel: full of windy rhetoric, droolings over technology, and plain bad writing. The wonder is that the Australian director Philip Noyce and his trio of top American scenarists have been able to boil this gargantuan mass down to a lean and clean movie in which plot, dialogue, and characterization move tersely and cogently forward at the right, imperceptibly accelerating pace, while the diverse elements and far-flung locations are held together with intelligence, sensitivity, and, yes, grace.

The three screenwriters are all individually distinguished: Steven Zaillian for *Schindler's List*, John Milius for *Apocalypse Now*, and Donald Stewart for *Patriot Games*; together, they are something greater than the sum of its parts. Under the director's watchful eye, they have produced a story that is, to be sure, more demanding than a mindless shoot-'em-up, but requiring no greater concentration than any serious picture. I myself, always left way behind by convoluted, elucubrated whodunits, had no difficulty keeping up here; my only problem was becoming so wrapped up in the manifold virtues of the filmmaking as to sometimes forget about the film.

Outstanding here is the savvy about just when to cut from locale to locale, from one strand of the tale to another, thanks in part to Neil Travis's hair's-breadth editing. Rather than risk dawdling, the film tends to cut away seconds sooner than customary, thus keeping your mind, as it were, on its

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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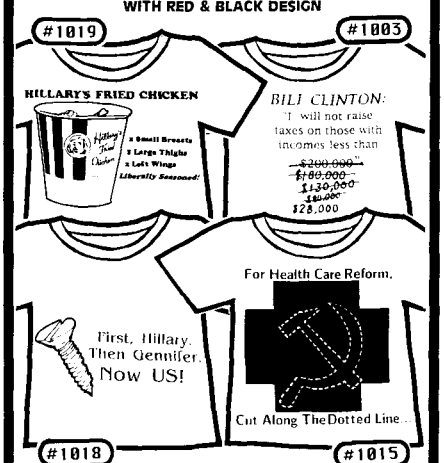

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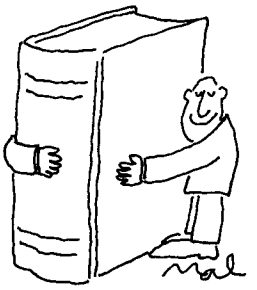
toes. Then there is the mastery of dialogue: a great deal is conveyed by understatement and implication, even by silences. Exposition is concise and blends with visual elements: for 142 minutes your eyes, ears, and brain are engaged with utmost rigor and economy; the film has the body of an athlete, certifiably fat-free.

The story concerns the President's private war with a Colombian drug cartel after a big-businessman friend and his family are killed at sea by a drug lord's men. The friend had acquired murky millions of dollars that President Bennett now feels free to take for the United States, in which effort he is abetted by Cutter, the National Security Advisor, and Ritter, a slippery CIA operative. They order Clark, a field agent, to assemble a dozen guerrillas with whom to infiltrate the Colombian jungle and assassinate the cartel bigwigs who have some claim to the money, and blow up their plants. Chief among these is Ernesto Escobedo (shades of Medellín's Pablo Escobar), intrigued against by his main henchman, Félix Cortez, who wants to supplant him and make a mutually beneficial deal with Cutter and Ritter, the Tweedledee and Tweedledum of high-echelon corruption, able to wrap the President around their Tweedlepinkies.



Meanwhile a CIA honcho, Admiral Greer, a sage and honorable man (James Earl Jones in a restrained performance), is diagnosed with terminal cancer, and has his trustiest analyst, Jack Ryan (once again the similarly trusty Harrison Ford), take over as deputy director, which means his tangling with Cutter and Ritter on the home front, and becoming involved in deadly adventures in Colombia, where fellow Americans drop like flies all around him. There are also lesser plot elements, such as Jack's home life with wife and children, and Cortez's affair with an American woman working for the CIA and, inadvertently, for him until she becomes a liability. Cutter and Ritter decide, with presidential support, that Clark and his troop must be liquidated by Cortez's men, forcing Ryan into a second bloody adventure in Colombia, not to mention a face-off with the President and his guilty sidekicks.

Ramifications abound, but the excitement never abates, and something else is achieved as well: a sense that in a greedy, craven, amoral world one or two good men can nevertheless make the scales tip their way, decency having a greater density than its opposite. What makes the film spellbinding is its unwavering sense of atmosphere achieved through ingenious cutting, flawless timing, unerring camera placements and angles: *this* is what it must feel like to be caught in enemy crossfire on a narrow Bogotá street; *this* must be the prevailing tone at Langley or in the White House; *such* is a sidewalk café in Panama City or a fiesta on a drug lord's front lawn, and so on and on.

To top it off, there is the magnificent cinematography of Donald M. McAlpine, another Australian, where every shot offers, quite unselfconsciously, something to be gratefully gaped at. With an uncanny sense of light and shadow, Mr. McAlpine finds the appropriate mood —or is it temperature?—of a scene. Sharpness and haziness likewise interact, and Terence Marsh's production design is always there providing the suitable hues. But, of course, it is the director who pulls it all together.

Harrison Ford once again relies on his alternation of aw-shucks ingenuousness with his no-sir gravity. Still, his Jack Ryan is the quintessential Good Scout, the heir of Gary Cooper and Jimmy Stewart, whose out-of-fashion boots Mr. Ford fills with slightly fancier footwork. As the cool, discreet, loving wife, Anne Archer could not be bettered, though you might wish her battered into something a bit less unruffled. Willem Dafoe's wild-card quality is just right for the volatile Clark, and no one could be sleazier than Harris Yulin (Cutter) or slimier than Henry Czerny (Ritter). A scene in which Ritter and Ryan fight a duel by computer—a sort of battling banjos, only less musical—is one of the film's highlights. Donald Moffat is comic-sinisterly on target as the wayward President; and Miguel Sandoval, as the relaxedly brutish Escobedo, and Joaquim de Almeida as a Latin lover *cum* Machiavelli, provide all the scum you could wish for.

Clear and Present Danger proceeds evenhandedly and surefootedly as it tidily attends to every aspect of solid filmmaking. It does not neglect sense for suspense, affect for effect. Unlike so many of today's movies aimed at our plexus or funnybone, this one heads for the mind and the heart, and does justice to both.

■ How lamentable by contrast is Oliver Stone's latest and most horrible film, ***Natural Born Killers***, from a story by another current hotshot, Quentin Tarantino. Mr. Stone's narcissism and megalomania, like badly driven horses, run away with this gross, pretentious, and ultimately senseless movie. Purporting to show how crime appeals to the American public, and how the media exploit it for their self-promotion and the public's cretinization, it is manifestly far too enamored of what it pretends to satirize, even if it knew how to do it.

Ostensibly, it is the story of Mickey and Mallory Knox, a parricidal and serial-killing young couple on an odyssey of manic self-indulgence and bloodshed. On that theme, Terrence Malick made the 1973 American classic, *Badlands*, from which *Killers* cribs a thing or two, but Mr. Stone and his hench-scribes, David Veloz and Richard Rutowski, turn the story into bestial excess, gimmicked up with every sort of irrelevant cinematic device: color and monochrome in meaningless alternation, sudden switches to videotape or drawn horror comix, handheld or tilted camera, constant cutaways to obtrusive irrelevancies—rattlesnakes particularly favored—and, in general, every known form of discrepancy and MTV-ish discontinuity, as if you were looking into a kaleidoscope manipulated by a whirling dervish.

Crassness is rampant, not least in the performances. Woody Harrelson's Mickey manages a certain idiosyncratically offhanded viciousness, but Juliette Lewis opts for all the tried and true hallmarks of cinematic psychopathy. Tom Sizemore contributes a manic cop, Tommy Lee Jones a maniacal prison warden, and Robert Downey Jr. a Geraldo-like voyeuristic and self-inflated TV talk-show host. None of these is a thought-through character, any more than the cheapest of all, Rodney Dangerfield's farcical-beastly father, and all of them swirl and caper about in a lunatic dance between hysteria and epilepsy.

Even the public's fascination with

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the lethal couple is only spottily conveyed, though Mr. Stone does occasionally stumble on striking images. But when the Knoxes end up as a happy family with two kiddies in a cozy van, what comes across is not *saeva indignatio* but hand-to-nose gloating. *Natural Born Killers* is neither wise nor witty enough for a satire, and displays only the depraved unhingedness of a hypertrophic ego.

Particularly offensive is the obtrusion of shots from the Menendez, Bobbitt, Tonya Harding, and O. J. Simpson telespectacles, lest a five-year-old should miss the movie's relevance; followed closely by cheap attempts at poetry, as when Mallory's bridal veil floats from a high bridge into a deep canyon, and stops midway in a freeze frame. Mr. Stone's real purpose must be to beat the public over the head with every blunt instrument he can muster: a subject on which the godfather of masochism, Count Leopold von Sacher Masoch, aptly pronounced, "Whoever allows himself to be whipped, deserves a whipping." □

DELECTATIONS

Bounty

LINDA BRIDGES

SUMMERTIME, and the livin' ain't easy, at least for anyone much south of Great Slave Lake. But as we try to balance how much air-conditioning we can afford against how much heat we can stand, there is one consolation: hazy, hot, and humid weather with lots of rain may be uncomfortable for humans, but it's evidently great for tomatoes and corn and blackberries and even lettuce.

Two years ago here in the Northeast we enjoyed a delightfully cool summer in which nothing ever really ripened. Last year, a wretched Bermuda High squatted in one place for two whole months, keeping the Midwest flooded and the East Coast parched; our tomatoes were shriveled little things, whereas the Midwestern ones, in John Coyne's sardonic account, were big and heavy—and resolutely green. But this summer we had August-quality tomatoes by mid July, and barring an unseasonable frost they should keep coming for another two months, yielding their full quota of mozzarella and tomatoes, tomato and basil salad, marinara sauce to put up for the winter, salade niçoise, and the dozens of other wonderful dishes from the northern coasts of the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Last year the lettuce, chard, and spinach looked like lacework; this year it's full and lush, in a multitude of varieties you won't see in your supermarket, or at any rate not in mine. Devotees have to go to country farmstands, big-city greenmarkets, or their own gardens for firm, slightly bitter green Waldman, which pairs beautifully in a salad with mild Red Oak Leaf; or for soft, mild green Simpson, which goes especially well with the wittily crinkled Lola Rossa, or the smooth, dark, slightly bitter Red Flame or Red Sails. Then there are lettuces that are available year round—but in very different forms. If the hot weather makes you crave olives and anchovies, the romaine is ready for a Greek salad, firm and juicy and not very much like its winter (or supermarket) cousin. Arugula, anyone? You can home in on it from five paces by the aroma alone, even if there is basil competing for the olfactory airspace. And though purists may frown, if your idea of the perfect green salad includes thin slices of radish and scallion (and if your idea of delightful meal preparation includes munching a couple of each while you work), well, it's a buyer's market. From the delicate thinnings of late spring to the full-grown versions of August, when scallions are so big they can be mistaken for leeks, they have been a delight.

Each to his own purism. I don't keep a fully seasonal kitchen; in January I will grumble but now and then buy an overpriced, underripe tomato from Holland or Israel.

Miss Bridges is NR's managing editor.

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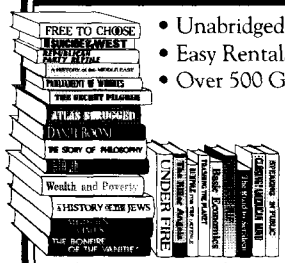

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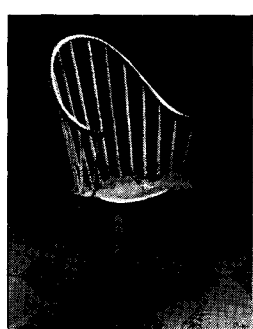

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But not corn. No matter how much I might yearn for it in June, I have learned to be patient and wait until Samascott Orchards from up North brings it to the Union Square Greenmarket in late July.

Corn is one foodstuff concerning which agricultural science seems to have had the consumer rather than the distributor or retailer in mind. The old rule was: Pick your corn no more than ten minutes before it is to go into the pot; otherwise the sugar will convert into starch, and before you know it your corn has turned into pig feed. Indeed, in a passage I've seen attributed to Mark Twain (although Twain aficionado Bill Rickenbacker couldn't place it), the following recipe was given: Build a fire at the edge of your corn patch, and heat a cauldron of water to boiling. Pick the requisite number of ears as fast as you can, sprint back to the fire, husk them, cook them, and eat them.

But several of the newish hybrids (my favorite, which Samascott identifies only as "Bicolor," has both white and yellow kernels) resist turning starchy. By the time I get my corn on the table, it has been off the plant nearly twenty hours. And yet it's deliciously sweet, but with a full, rich corn flavor (which, to my taste, the very sweet white corns such as Silver Queen tend to lack). Even a greedy person will feel no need to overdo the butter.

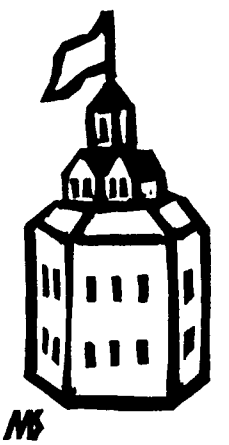
Of course, summer—even this summer—isn't all a bin of corn. It is one of life's ironies that some of the great fruits for pies—gooseberries, currants, sweet cherries—have their brief season during precisely the three or four weeks when you least want to light the oven. But it would seem ungrateful not to make at least one pie (with a real lattice crust, please—if you've never tried one, you'll be amazed at how extra-flaky are the upper portions of the pastry strips). Fortunately, though, the English invented some great desserts that require only a couple of minutes gentle cooking on top of the stove—gooseberry fool, for example, where the fruit is lightly mashed and mixed with whipped cream; or summer pudding, in which white bread is ingeniously used in place of pie crust, to soak up the juices of whatever combination of berries you want to use. The English food writer Jane Grigson suggests mixing red currants with raspberries and/or blackberries.

Meanwhile, as the weather steams, I find it helps to remember in detail, finger by frozen finger, how cold I was last January on the Ram's Head chairlift at Killington. And to reflect that while spring and autumn are the most beautiful seasons, it isn't they that feed us. Indeed, the restaurateur Nicola Paone tells me that the Italians, devoted both to cultivated produce and to wild game, have a proverb: "Without summer and winter, we'd have nothing to eat." □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Heroic Victims: Stalin's Foreign Legion in the Spanish Civil War, by Herbert Romerstein (Council for the Defense of Freedom, 127 pp., $7.95)

THE NAZI and Fascist intervention in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39 is well documented but there was a gap on the Communist side. That gap has now been filled by Herbert Romerstein. One of the West's leading specialists on Communism, Mr. Romerstein has been studying the archives of the Soviet-organized International Brigades. The outcome is a moving, at times harrowing, account of the young recruits: mostly idealistic, mostly members of the CPUSA, who thought they were enrolling for seven months but found later that they were in the war for the duration, on penalty of imprisonment or even execution. Untrained, ill-armed, and poorly led, 1,800 of the 3,000 young Americans who served in the Abraham Lincoln or the George Washington Battalion lost their lives. Their commitment turned to bewilderment with the Nazi–Soviet Pact of August 1939. Stalin had ordered them to turn their wrath on the democracies, not on the Nazis and Fascists—until Hitler's legions invaded the USSR. It then became PC to support the Western war effort.



—BRIAN CROZIER

Liberal Education and the Canon: Five Great Texts Speak to Contemporary Social Issues, by Laura Christian Ford (Camden House, 292 pp., $38)

LAURA Christian Ford tries to put a different spin on five classics (Homer, Plato, the Bible, Shakespeare, and the American founding documents) by asserting their relevance to contemporary social issues, and also by finding penumbras of modern liberalism in them. In the chapters entitled "Rape" and "The Death Penalty" Miss Ford is at her best, culling provocative insights from the sources. But in other chapters—"Sexual Harassment," "Homophobia," "Abortion," and "The Right to Die"—she loses her way with weak inferences, simplistic appeals to authority, and non-sequiturs to support her anachronistic liberal conclusions. Also, the book relies on the uncritical presupposition that moral values are not a matter of knowledge at all, but rather a matter of religion. The book has received some praise from members of the humanities establishment, who have apparently forgotten the comely virtues of logical reasoning.

—MATTHEW CAROLAN

Henry and Clara, by Thomas Mallon (Ticknor & Fields, 358 pp., $22.95)

AS IN previous books, Mr. Mallon blends history and creativity, recreating here the unexplored lives of Clara and Henry Rathbone, the young couple who sat in the box with President and Mrs. Lincoln at Ford's Theater. While doing research on John Wilkes Booth, Mr. Mallon came across references to the Rathbones and decided to pursue their tragic story. He pieced together the history of the couple's lives to form the foundation of this novel, which he then filled with his bright imagination. Raised as stepbrother and stepsister, Henry and Clara fall deeply in love (to their parents' dismay), are befriended by the Lincolns, and are led to events of horror after witnessing the President's murder. Beautifully written, *Henry and Clara* is marked by tender passion, and its characters are, for all their faults, endearing. But Mr. Mallon shows us the dark side of passion as well, leaving us with a most interesting history lesson, the romance of love, and the thrill of madness. —KARINA ROLLINS

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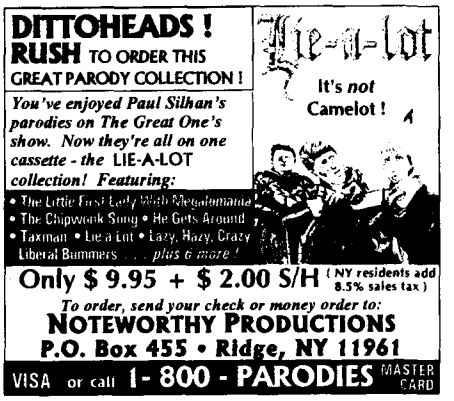

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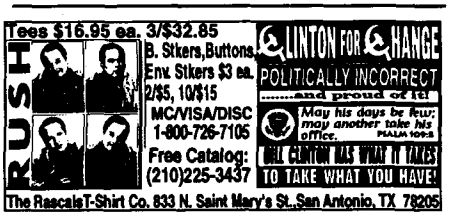

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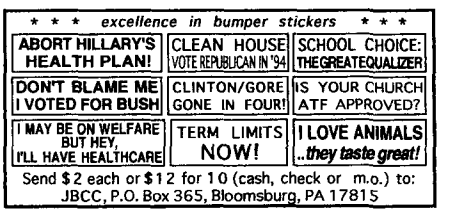

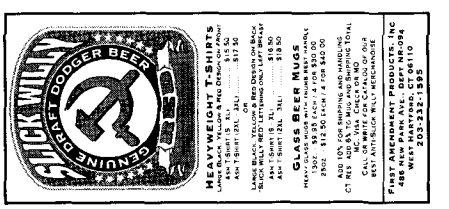

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 M	2 G	3 J	4 A	5 F	6 N	7 R	8 E	9 C	10 B	11 K		12 H	13 O	14 L		15 V	16 D	17 U	18 F	19 J
20 C		21 Y	22 M	23 E	24 G	25 I	26 S		27 H	28 X	29 C	30 A	31 B	32 R	33 N		34 E	35 Y	36 M	37 G
	38 T	39 J	40 A		41 M	42 C	43 O	44 P	45 R	46 S	47 V	48 K	49 Q	50 G	51 N	52 E	53 I	54 A	55 H	
56 B	57 C	58 F	59 M	60 S	61 W		62 G		63 Y	64 D	65 O	66 V		67 J	68 M	69 H	70 C	71 S	72 Z	
73 B	74 R		75 J	76 I	77 T		78 K	79 P	80 E		81 A	82 L	83 H	84 M		85 E	86 R	87 L	88 F	
89 Z	90 N		91 M	92 B	93 V	94 O	95 J	96 R	97 F	98 X	99 P	100L		101E	102J	103L	104T	105W	106C	
107F	108R	109Y	110M		111H	112I		113Q	114S		115O	116E	117J		118T	119B	120Z		121D	122Y
123C	124K		125R	126V	127N	128D	129Z		130I	131H	132U	133L		134G	135M	136V	137A	138Q	139E	140C
141S	142F		143N	144X	145F	146W	147D		148P	149T	150R	151G	152B	153M	154V	155L		156S	157U	158Z
159H		160P	161O		162J	163C	164X	165K	166E	167G	168D	169A	170B		171E	172T	173R	174Y	175A	176F
177K		178N	179J	180O		181Y		182F	183K	184S	185M	186D	187I	188B		189G	190W	191L	192A	193K

DIRECTIONS

A. Hardhat's dinner bucket — 54 137 40 192 81 169 30 175 4

B. Legitimate power — 92 31 10 56 119 152 73 170 188

C. Refusing to budge — 70 123 29 42 57 163 106 140 9 20

D. Former Eastern Bloc member — 147 168 121 64 128 186 16

E. Winesap concoction (2 words) — 52 171 85 101 80 23 116 139 34 8 166

F. Like some spa visitors — 176 58 145 182 107 5 18 142 97 88

G. Held in trust — 134 50 2 151 189 24 62 167 37

H. Final sort of newspaper item — 69 27 111 159 131 12 83 55

I. DUIs have hit this — 130 76 187 112 53 25

J. Gregorian chant beginning — 162 75 117 179 95 39 67 102 3 19

K. Def. M is in this state — 193 165 124 11 78 48 177 183

L. Quotidian — 191 103 14 87 155 100 82 133

M. Eagle's abode — 41 110 153 135 22 84 36 185 91 68 59 1

N. In Forrest Gump, these were "special" — 127 178 90 33 51 143 6

O. Crime of the highway? — 180 161 115 65 94 13 43

P. Gypsies, at times — 148 99 160 79 44

Q. Gerund's end — 113 138 49

R. These trump lies and damn lies — 74 125 86 150 45 173 96 108 7 32

S. Diva's last aria (2 words) — 114 156 184 141 26 46 60 71

T. New York city, or Ionian island — 104 77 118 149 38 172

U. Biological duct — 17 157 132

V. Mortal — 126 136 93 154 15 47 66

W. Approaching — 105 146 61 190

X. Character — 28 164 144 98 129

Y. Holy day — 174 122 63 21 181 109 35

Z. Demonstrated — 129 72 89 120 158

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram. STEVE DALEY: *The Wrong Stuff*: "Through sins real and imagined, the President has cast himself as a man with a soft, gooey center. He sees himself as a negotiator, a conciliator, a post-modern politico who wants to solve problems without partisan rancor."

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Yesterday's Heroes

NEW YORK, AUGUST 19

The Pope is coming to town soon and unless his charisma is at very high pitch, he is not going to get the reception he got in days gone by. Since he is the same man and, in the view of many, the same Vicar of Christ, we wonder: how much of the reduced esteem, or enthusiasm, flows from acts for which he is personally responsible, how much from shifting public perspectives—particularly with the end of the Cold War.

For a long while the mere mention of Solzhenitsyn's name justified the removal of one's hat in tribute. Lech Walesa, for a few years, was the truly mythogenic figure, tolling the death knell of Marx's proletariat. He was the most conspicuous working man in the Communist world, and he was demanding those liberties for Polish workers that meant the destruction of Communist postulates from the sacred Lenin on. When in 1978 John Paul II was made Pope the act of the cardinals in Rome seemed audacious beyond the endurance of history. To reach out for the first time in centuries beyond the boundaries of Italy to find a primate was daring enough. To reach into the heart of Eastern Europe and pluck out from a Communist colony a simple man with cosmopolitan experience seemed a consecration God-like in audacity and verve.

A decade and a half later, Solzhenitsyn is regarded by many as a querulous old man, smitten with an ill-digested idea of old Russia. Walesa is dismissed by many as a tiresome Polish bureaucrat intoxicated by a vision of himself no longer supported by the plight of his country.

And Pope John Paul's luster is swept away, and he is viewed by many as: the old Pope, clinging to old forms & old dogmas, enemy of women's rights, inept diplomat.

On the last point, his critics continue to wonder why on earth Pope John Paul elected to give a special decoration to Kurt Waldheim. Why? The easy answer is that former Secretaries General of the United Nations are the kind of people who are always picking up honors of one kind or another, but that answer will not do. Waldheim is not permitted even to enter the United States, because it is accepted that he withheld in his autobiography, probably even lied about, the nature of the services he gave to the Nazis during the war. What then was the Pope up to, in giving him the Order of Pius IX? This is the same Pope who chaperoned the Vatican into recognizing the State of Israel. Why did he single out Waldheim for an honor?

But those who might be willing to let this go as an idiosyncrasy, or perhaps traceable to an assembly line that moves people with a certain set of accomplishments ineluctably toward brass rings, wonder at the militancy of the Vatican's position in Cairo on the matter of birth control. Thirty years ago, Clare Boothe Luce wrote in NATIONAL REVIEW an essay in which she argued that the Catholic Church had to make reasonable and prudent progress in the course of mobilizing a Christian position on world population. Mrs. Luce, a Catholic convert with a highly disciplined mind, argued that the difference between abortion—so to speak the Hiroshima bomb of birth control—and a contraceptive has got to evoke some sense of moral distinction.

When the Pope's representative last week inveighed against any use of contraceptives he diminished the moral opposition to abortion. By declaring in effect that the two are sinful, he encourages the mind to entertain the notion that they are equally sinful. And the mind simultaneously engaged with the problem of overpopulation begins to edge the Vatican out of the picture as an important player in the dialogue.

And of course it is the same Pope who declines to ordain women, and is undeviating on the matter of homosexuality. When the Cold War shimmered away, Solzhenitsyn and Walesa and the Pope became merely ex-prophets, viewed as having done their work. The Pope's mandate is of course eternal, in his judgment and in that of others who see him as he sees himself, servant of the servants of God. But he is conspicuous, on a stage whose lights and shadows are overwhelmingly secularist, for telling people what they do not really want to hear. But then that's always the problem, isn't it, for those with one foot in the City of God, the other in the City of Man? □

Castro and Pridefall

NEW YORK, AUGUST 30

The Cuba mess reminds us that the primary engine in human behavior is pride. The events after the end of the Berlin Wall in 1989 were disastrous to Fidel Castro in two ways. What he lost first was the basis for his public life. The international Communist movement was definitively discredited and then abandoned. For Castro this was the equivalent of the College of Cardinals meeting to declare that Jesus Christ was a fake. But then too there was the awful material consequence. There was no longer the economic subsidy from the Soviet Union to sustain Castro's lunacies. All he had left was his pride.

It pays to remind ourselves that Castro is an abominable human being. The meaning of Castro is right there at the public library, in the book *Against All Hope* by Armando Valladres. It is his account of the twenty years of torture to which he, a sometime companion-in-arms of Castro, was subjected as punishment for merely raising the question of human rights. It is an indication of Castro's insensitivity to the kind of thing they talk about at the United Nations. Stalin could have driven through Gulag, Hitler through Auschwitz, Castro through Los Pinos without feeling anything distinguishable from what one might feel visiting a sausage factory.

But whereas some forms of cruelty are autonomous, Castro is of the fraternity that needs the sublimating vision. In his case, to be on the side of Marxist history, where whatever you do is justified if it accelerates the process that will usher the world into eudemonia. When Marx–Lenin failed him, he was left with his own resources, and they are not enough to sustain his slave kingdom.

But his pride requires him to ignore reality, and to pull the tail of the tiger for public distraction. Whenever Castro is in trouble, he invokes the Colossus of the North as the cause of all his problems. And here we are.

Now pride is not exclusively the property of Fidel Castro. It moves President Clinton and the Washington Establishment and indeed most Americans. We have suffered many indignities at the hands of Castro. He came here in 1959 promising freedom and democracy for his

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liberated people and we cheered him. Two years later we decided we had to overthrow him and he humiliated us at the Bay of Pigs. A year later he was the instrument through which a world war was very nearly precipitated during the missile crisis. We received into the United States one-tenth of the population of Cuba, incidental victims of our failed statecraft. It is entirely understandable that our default position, as the computer-folk would put it, should be: To hell with Castro; the more he suffers the better.

But we need to acknowledge the new historical perspective. It is that Castro continues to be an enemy of civilized thought, but he is no longer a strategic enemy. In 1962, when he had forty-odd nuclear missiles in place, he was as much the enemy as Khrushchev.

That's over. He is now one more bloodthirsty *caudillo*. Our concern is purely humanitarian. But whereas the boat people in Vietnam were direct victims of U.S. military ineptitude, refugees from Castro's Cuba are not our responsibility. The object of our policy then must be to expedite their repatriation, and to satisfy our own pride by acknowledging the strategic nothingness of Castro.

Concretely then: We should not object to meeting with Castro's representative at the UN. Although Cuba is no longer our problem, its people should be the beneficiaries of our good offices. What Castro wants is economic aid. This we correctly deny him, for reasons of a justified pride. But to suspend the blockade is merely to treat Castro as we treat other tyrants, in China and elsewhere. Our negotiators need to bear in mind that to end the blockade now is not retroactively to discredit it. It is to acknowledge fresh perspectives. If the Cuban people overthrow Castro that is the end for which devoutly we pray. But if they do not, he is their problem. □

The Ollie North Front

NEW YORK, AUGUST 16

Many full-time U.S. conservatives (including me) backed James Miller for the Republican nomination for senator in Virginia. In our estimate Miller was better prepared and educated for the post. But that became irrelevant when 14,000 Republican delegates voted overwhelmingly: They wanted Oliver North.

Two subsidiary but not irrelevant points. The first is the legal barbed wire that surrounds Candidate North's background. You will perhaps remember that he was found guilty by a jury on three counts. The first involved aiding and abetting a chronological shuffle that served the purposes of North's superior (Robert McFarlane) and *his* superior (Ronald Reagan). The second had to do with the destruction of papers judged by the court to have been government property. The third (I always thought this strange) had to do with accepting an anti-intruder alarm system as a "gift." To dispose of this last question, there are those who incline to permissiveness on the matter of installing devices, whatever their provenance, that stand between terrorists (yes, North had been threatened) and the safety of one's wife and children.

Anyway, the appellate court overruled the trial court on the grounds that North hadn't had a fair trial. The court ruled that the special prosecutor had never proven that any "government document" had been destroyed and further that incriminating material had been ventilated which had been compelled by a congressional committee on the promise of immunity. Anti-North people will continue to say that he got out on a technicality. Defenders will object: He did not, in their judgment, get a fair trial. My own retrospective view is that Colonel North did not reveal all that was expected in the off-the-record meeting he had in 1986 with a half-dozen members of the Intelligence Committee. The gravamen here (What was it that he did to which we have an enduring moral objection?) is not easily fixed. To begin with, most men engaged in public affairs lie directly or by omission quite regularly. It is probably correct that there is a difference between lying to 100 million listeners at a political convention ("I will reduce taxes on the middle class") and not telling a group of congressmen all they want to know. Granted. But: did the person who lied do so for personal gain or out of loyalty to a command structure? It was never doubted even by North's critics that he thought himself as engaged in acts of loyalty to his superiors. Bad judgment, but not, surely, terminally disqualifying. We are not talking about a Nuremberg defense, useful to men who practice genocide.

Finally, there was a reaction against North's bearing when he appeared before the congressional committee. One too many stanzas of the "Star-Spangled Banner." Patriotism can cloy, and Ollie North did his best when he was on the stand to make it cloy. On the other hand, so did General MacArthur ("yard after yard of velvet," Whittaker Chambers privately commented on the famous speech advising us that generals just fade away, they never die).

But other perspectives are in order. One of them is that a Republican senator from Virginia could make the difference between another horrible term with a Democratic Senate, and a chance for Republicans to get into the act of government. You name it, Oliver North is on the conservative side of the issue. Term limitation, presidential line-item veto, a constitutional amendment on the deficit, restoration of the right of prayer in the public schools—etc. Immediately after the convention in Richmond, James Miller came out for the election of the candidate he had opposed for the nomination. A few days later, after a brief though noticeable pause, Senator Dole did as much. The entire Republican hierarchy with the exception of Senator John Warner, who doesn't much like conservatives, came around. And, to the consternation of such doomsayers as Kevin Phillips, whose profession is to disdain conservatives who do not follow his lonely lead, the polls suddenly reveal that North is running neck and neck against the incumbent, Democrat Charles Robb.

There are two distracting candidacies, one Democratic (Governor Douglas Wilder, who hates Robb), one Republican (Marshall Coleman, who hates North). But these are irrelevancies. The next senator will be either Robb or North.

I should add that a month or so after the awful Mylai episode, when the loony Lieutenant Calley fired at and killed the civilian population of a Vietnamese village, I had a letter from another lieutenant, indignantly objecting to the proposition, then widely advertised, that this was the way Marines tended to act. It was very eloquent, and the record showed that it was written by a highly decorated Marine who had risked his life to save the lives of fellow soldiers. I invited him to state his case on *Firing Line*, which he did, cogently and persuasively. It was, of course, young Oliver North, in 1971. □

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Overview Overdo?

"Is this a great country or what?"
—Candice Bergen on a TV commercial

"Is this a great country or what?"
—L. J. Davis in The New Republic

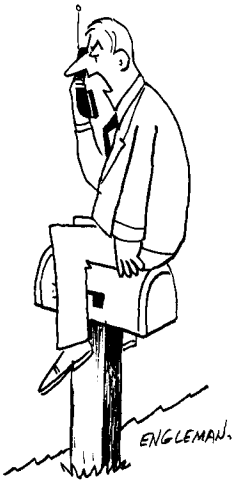
"Is this a great country or what?"
—Headline in the Washington Post Magazine

OKAY, OKAY, it's a great country. Now can we retire this little gag? Not that any protests of mine will do any good. Once a mild bit of jocosity lodges itself in the mind of the chattering classes, the rest of us are doomed to hear it until . . . well, until the next mild bit of jocosity gets lodged there.

But finding a substitute will not be easy. These favored catch phrases need to meet certain tests. Most importantly they must flatter the person who deploys them—show him to be ironic, skeptical, superior. Recall the recent popularity of "rocket science." (See also "brain surgery.") Joe Biden, who fancies himself nothing if not ironic and superior, made the case for his obese "crime bill" by saying its logic wasn't "rocket science." Sophisticated people would naturally snicker at any mention of Dan Quayle, but to call him an idiot would seem too unironic. So they would smile faintly and say: "Well, he's no rocket scientist." The bonus is the implication that with a moment's concentration they themselves could work out the coordinates for the next shuttle launch.

Sometimes these catch phrases become so common, so overused, that they pass from notice altogether. They're like verbal hiccups, barely audible. It is no longer possible, for example, for George Mitchell to uncork two successive sentences without using the phrase "quite frankly." You might infer from this that everything else the senator is saying is somehow less than frank, but that's not what he means. Like so many other terms in popular discourse (controversial, taboo), "quite frankly" has a definite meaning, but it is precisely the opposite of its dictionary meaning. It's a code by which Senator Mitchell sends us a subtle warning: "I am now talking complete balls."

By far the most popular of these verbal hiccups is heard almost exclusively on the Left. I refer, of course, to the phrase "in this country," plopped superfluously into any sentence at any time. I first caught on to it many years ago, when I too was on the Left. During long discussions with a socialist co-worker, I noticed how both of us used the phrase, shall we say, indiscriminately. I can still recall the flare of my friend's nostrils when he would declare, "Less than 1 per cent of the people in this country own more than 326 per cent of the wealth in this country," and I would nod so vigorously I'd get a headache and say something like, "The distribution of wealth in this country is a result of the patriarchal system of control in this country." In unexpected flashes of self-consciousness I began to wonder why we kept using the phrase, since both of us knew that we weren't talking about, say, Chad. There's something inexorable about this kind of self-consciousness, by the way. Within three years I was voting for Reagan.



"You better not just be saying. . . 'The check is in the mail.'"

Anyway, I think I know now why the phrase is used in this way. It lends your point a subtly accusatory air, as if you're holding "this country" at arm's length and giving it a distasteful once-over. It's an act of dissociation, not ironic but definitely skeptical. I have yet to see a left-winger, from Barbra Streisand to Paul Wellstone, who does-not resort to the usage as a matter of habit.

THERE is a glaring exception to this rule, though, one I've noticed with increasing interest over the last year or so. Surely from Wellesley onward, Mrs. Clinton is just the type from whom you'd expect to hear "in this country" like a mantra. But no! "We're so grateful to have all of you here, representing small-business men and women from every corner in our country," she said at a recent ceremony. At another: "This occasion is so important for our country . . ." In brief remarks in early June she eschewed the "this country" formulation no fewer than four times, substituting "our country" in each instance. Of course she backslides occasionally, usually before a friendly crowd—"That's what the UAW has done in the fight for social justice and change in this country"—but in the main she has canned the old locution for the new.

Our First Lady's self-discipline and single-mindedness are legendary, but imagine the expenditure of will this must have cost her. The habit of a lifetime, reinforced in endless meetings of the Legal Services Corporation and the Children's Defense Fund, has been reversed. It's possible that she uses the first-person plural in the imperial sense, so that she really means: "This occasion is so important for the country I have recently acquired." More than possible: likely, in fact. Even so, the newfound sense of identification is telling. But can it last, with her grandest scheme for remaking this country, health-care reform, so firmly rejected in this country? We will have to listen closely in the months ahead. She may be forced to conclude that, contrary to the catch phrase of the hour, ours isn't such a great country after all.

—ANDREW FERGUSON

Mr. Ferguson is a senior writer for The Washingtonian.

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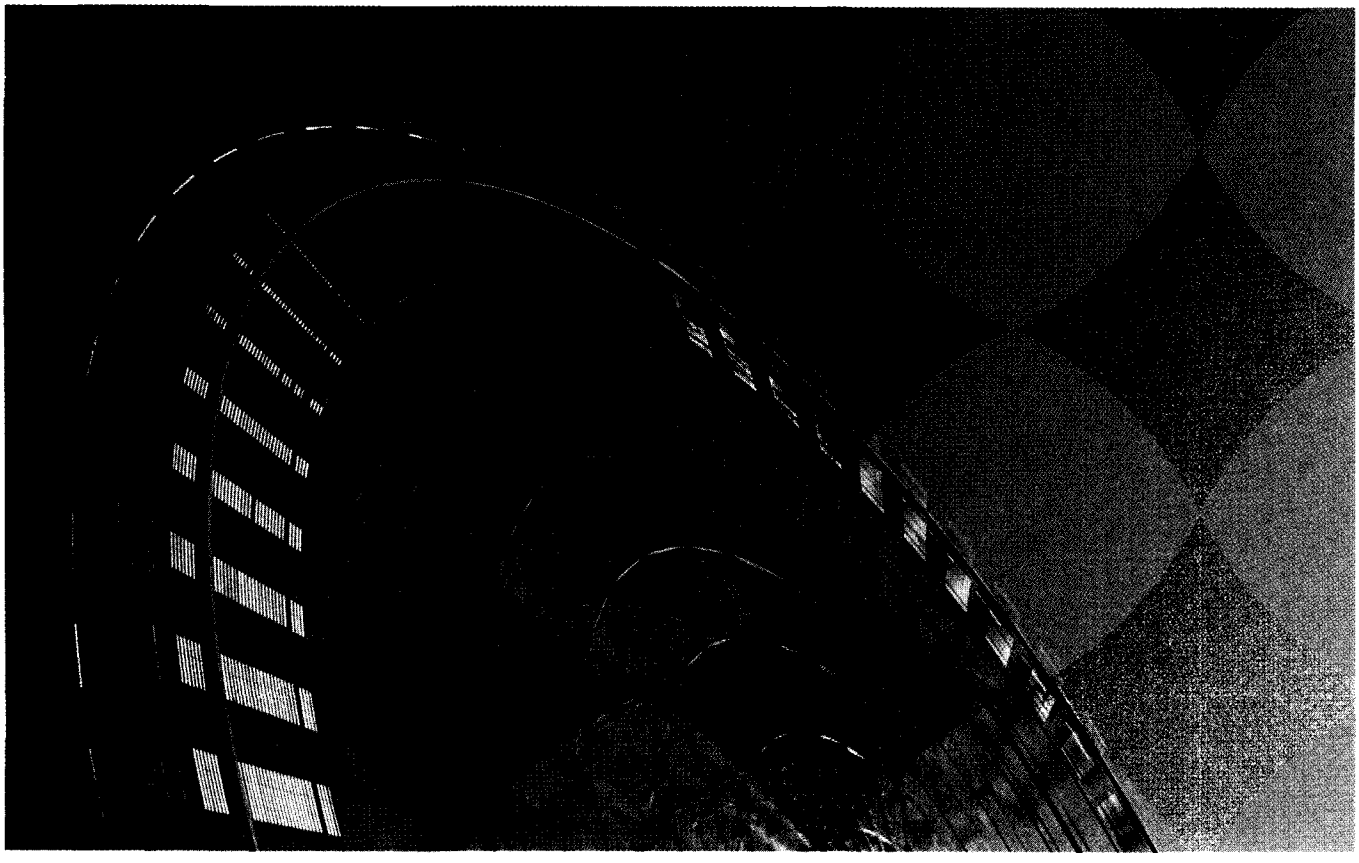

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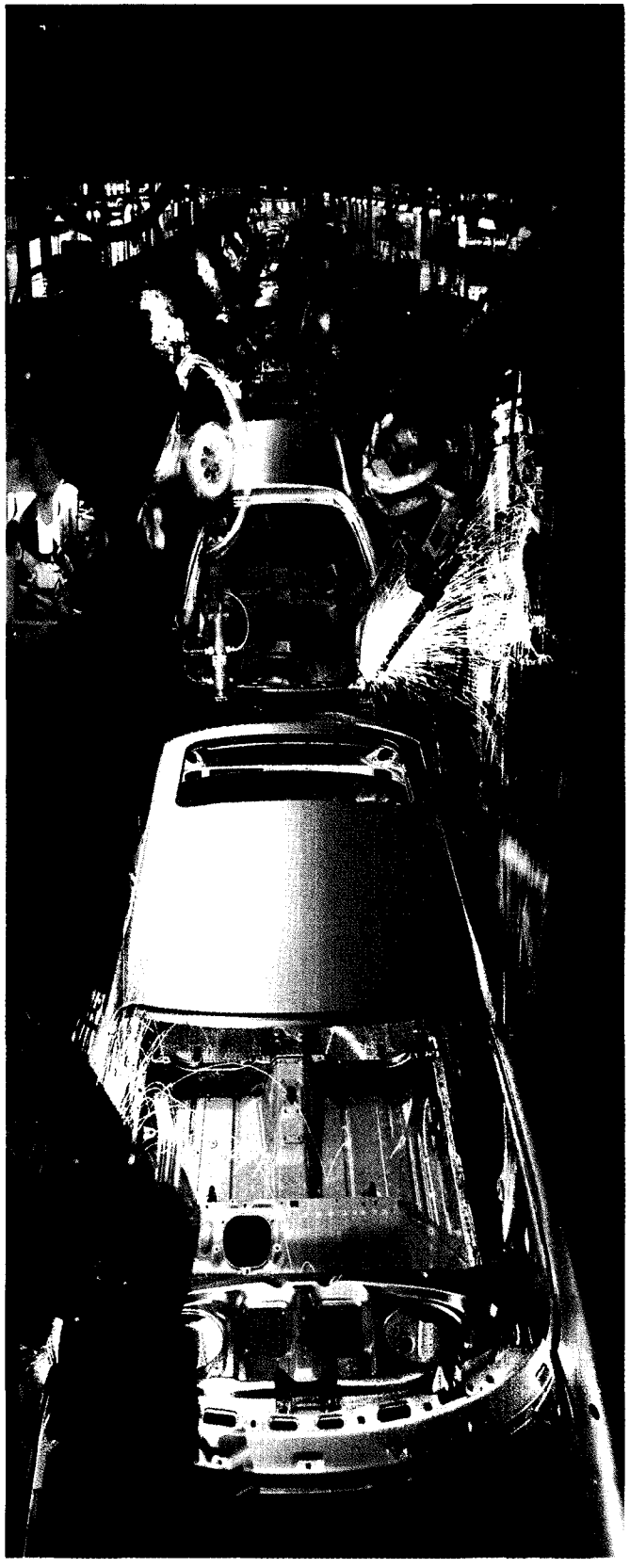

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